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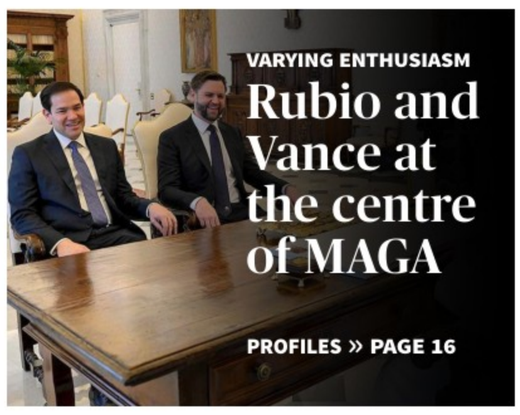

West Bengal Police step up probe against ED searches

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The police in Kolkata and Bidhannagar have stepped up their investigation into a complaint against the Enforcement Directorate's searches on the I-PAC's office and the residence of its co-founder, Pratik Jain.

The police have started collecting CCTV footage from both the Salt Lake office and Mr. Jain's home on Loudon Street. Investigators are also speaking to those who were present when the ED's searches were conducted on Thursday.

The ED and the West Bengal government had approached the Calcutta High Court on Friday. Due to a ruckus in the courtroom, the case was adjourned till January 14. The West Bengal government has filed a caveat in the Supreme Court in the matter.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Defying U.S. warning, Iran clamps down on protests

Protests continue despite Internet and phone blackouts, with at least 65 killed and over 2,300 detained; Iran warns participants and supporters of charges, while America expresses support

Associated Press
DUBAI

Protests sweeping across Iran neared the two-week mark on Saturday, with the country's government acknowledging the ongoing demonstrations despite an intensifying crackdown and as the Islamic Republic remains cut off from the rest of the world.

With the Internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has become more difficult. But the death toll in the protests has grown to at least 65 and over 2,300 others have been detained, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency. Iranian state television is reporting on security force casualties while portraying control over the nation.

Growing dissent: Vehicles set on fire during the anti-government unrest in Zanjan, Iran, on Friday night. AP

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has signalled a clampdown, despite U.S. warnings. Tehran escalated its threats on Saturday, with Attorney-General Mohammad Movahedi Azad warning that anyone taking part in protests would be considered an "enemy of God". The statement carried by Iranian state television said even those who "helped rioters" would face the charge.

"Prosecutors must carefully and without delay, by issuing indictments, prepare the grounds for the trial and decisive confrontation with those who, by betraying the nation and creating insecurity, seek foreign domination over the country," the statement read. "Proceedings must be conducted without leniency, compassion or indulgence."

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio offered support for the protesters. "The United States supports the brave people of Iran," Mr. Rubio wrote on Saturday on the social platform X. The State Department separately warned: "Do not play games with President (Donald) Trump. When he says he'll do something, he means it."

Saturday marks the start of the work week in Iran, but many schools and universities reportedly held online classes, Iranian state television reported.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

NEARBY

BJP, JD(S) accuse Cong. of spreading misinformation

BENGALURU
The BJP and JD(S) accused the Congress of "spreading misinformation" on the VB-G RAM G scheme, while welcoming Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's decision to convene a special session of the Legislature to discuss the issue. » PAGE 8

Families facing social boycott pin hopes on new law

ULAVI (SHIVAMOGGA DIST.)
Many residents in several villages in Sorab taluk have been victims of social boycotthope for relief from the new law passed in the last Assembly session. » PAGE 8

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 6
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

BNP names Tarique Rahman party chief

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Tarique Rahman has been appointed chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), days after the demise of his mother and party chairperson Khaleda Zia following a prolonged illness.

BNP secretary-general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir confirmed the appointment to the media after a meeting of the standing committee of the party, *Dhaka Tribune* reported.

Mr. Rahman, speaking at a meet-and-greet event on Saturday, said there was "no reason" for the country to return to the political conditions that existed before the toppling of the Awami League regime on August 5, 2024, a news portal reported.

"Following the passing of BNP chairperson and former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, the position of party chairman became vacant. In line with the BNP constitution, a meeting of the National Standing Committee was held," the BNP said in a post on the social media platform X.

"At the meeting, Mr. Rahman was unanimously appointed to the vacant post and formally given responsibility as the Chairman of the BNP," it added.

Mr. Rahman, 60, has emerged as a leading contender for the post of Prime Minister in the polls.

In 2002, Mr. Rahman was made the BNP's senior joint secretary-general and became senior vice-chairman in 2009. In 2018, when Zia was imprisoned, Mr. Rahman was appointed acting chairperson of the party.

Heat over VB–G RAM G Act

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

While Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday said that Congress would launch a campaign "to save MGNREGA" from January 26, with a 5 to 10 km march in each Assembly constituency, the BJP and JD(S) came together in defence of the law that replaces it, VB-G RAM G.

The BJP and JD(S) claimed the Congress was "misleading" people on VB-G RAM G and they would launch a campaign to create awareness.

FULL REPORT ON » PAGE 8

ATTEND TODAY, JANUARY 11 COME. TOUR. MEET.
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Join us at PES University's Open House to meet our esteemed faculty, get all your queries answered, explore our state-of-the-art infrastructure, and discover why we are a top choice for your academic journey.
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B.Com (Hons) CMA
B.Com (Hons) CA
B.Com (Hons) CFA
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B.Sc. (Hons) Economics
PSYCHOLOGY
B.Sc. (Hons) Psychology
M.Sc. Psychology
ARTS
B.A. (Hons) Performing Arts
LAW
BBA-LLB (Hons)
BA-LLB (Hons)
LLB (Hons)
LLM
DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE
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M.Des
B.Arch
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Blast from the past: A *Kathputli* performance in progress at the Hawa Mahal complex in Jaipur. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Deft hands: An artisan carefully carves sharp features into the wooden face of a *Kathputli* puppet inside a home in Kathputli Nagar, Jaipur.

Seasoned strokes: With effortless ease, a woman paints the eyes and nose of a puppet in Kathputli Nagar.

Vibrant tradition: Bright, colourful clothes are being pinned on a *Kathputli* doll.

Kathputli: pulling strings in Jaipur's puppet colony

In this Jaipur corner, nearly 250 families carry forward one of Rajasthan's oldest folk art forms, *Kathputli*; these artisans sew bright costumes onto small wooden puppets that are used by travelling performers who narrate tales of Rajput kings, warriors, folk heroes, and moral stories

Emmanual Yogini
emmanual.jackkie@thehindu.co.in

In a maze of narrow lanes in the 'Pink City' of Jaipur lies Kathputli Nagar, a place where stories are not written but carved, stitched, and brought to life with strings. Inside cramped homes stacked close together, men and women sit on the floor, shaping small wooden faces, painting bold eyes, and sewing vibrant costumes. Nearly 250 families live here, many of them have been preserving the craft for generations. What begins in their modest homes eventually finds its way to bustling markets, cultural fairs, and stages across the world.

These puppets, known as *Kathputlis*, are one of Rajasthan's oldest folk art forms. The name comes from *kath* (wood) and *putli* (doll), reflecting their simple yet expressive construction. Historically, *Kathputli* performances were used by travelling performers to narrate tales of Rajput kings, brave warriors, folk heroes, and moral stories to village audiences. Long before modern forms of entertainment, *Kathputlis* were a powerful medium of communication.

The design of these Rajasthani puppets mirrors the State's rich culture. Their colourful attire draw inspiration from royal courts and desert traditions, while their sharp features and exaggerated expressions add drama to every movement. Each puppet represents a character from everyday life or folklore, helping preserve the State's social and cultural identity.

Puppet shows remain the soul of this tradition. Accompanied by folk music on the dholak and harmonium, puppeteers bring the *Kathputlis* to life with strings and rhythmic narration. The performances brim with humour, music, and satire, often reflecting social realities alongside legendary tales. From the homes of Kathputli Nagar to bigger stages, *Kathputlis* continue to carry Rajasthan's voice across generations.

Repurposed magic: A sari is being cut to create costumes for the puppets.

Road accident deaths fall for second consecutive year

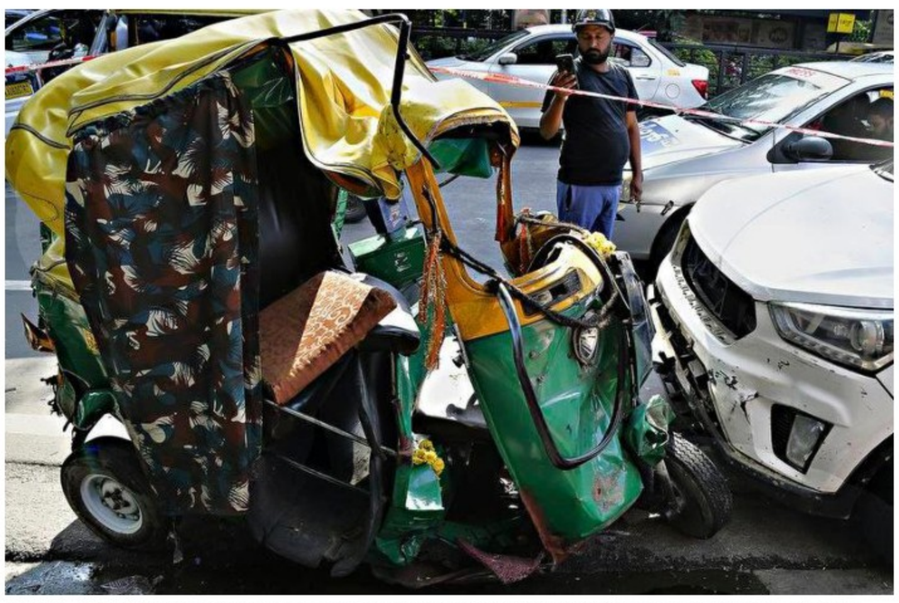
Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), attributes the improvement to better enforcement and special drives such as drunk-driving checks, which led to a reduction in accidents

Chetan B.C.
BENGALURU

Bengaluru saw a marginal rise in road accidents in 2025, recording 4,893 incidents compared to 4,769 in 2024, according to Bengaluru Traffic police (BTP) data. On the positive side, the number of fatal accidents and deaths have declined for the second consecutive year .

The fringes of the city have emerged as hotspots for fatal incidents, with the top five police stations located on the outskirts of the city accounted for 27% of the accidents, revealed ASTraM data.

The last five years from 2021 to 2025 have recorded fewer accidents than the 2011-2015 period. However, the percentage of fatal accidents increased by 4.8%, a trend attributed to policy changes and the addition of four police stations added to the city limits in 2025 .



In 2024, about 212 people died due to self-accidents, while the number stood at 210 in 2023. In 2025, this figure declined to 180, marking a 15% drop. FILE PHOTO

TRACING TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS

2025: The year that was

Overall, 2025 fared better compared to previous years, which is evident from a substantial dip in self-accidents and a marginal decline in pedestrian deaths. In 2024, 212 people died due to self-accidents, while the number stood at 210 in 2023. In 2025, this figure declined to 180, marking a 15% drop. Pedestrian deaths due to road accidents also fell to 225 in 2025 from 233 in 2024. The number was 260 in 2023.

Karthik Reddy, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), attributed the improvement to better enforcement and special drives such as drunk-driving checks, which led to a reduction in accidents.

A senior police officer from the north division told *The Hindu* that they adopted scientific approaches such as closing entry and exit points and U-turns on the outskirts, which were major contributing factors to accidents. However, he admitted that pedestrian safety remains a major concern. On the other hand, injuries continue to be a concern. In 2024, 3,900 non-fatal accidents left 4,022 people injured. The number of non-fatal accidents increased to 4,050 in 2025, leaving 4,272 people injured.

The officer explained that the city has been witnessing a rise in vehicle numbers and congestion, leading to an increase in minor accidents. He added that accidents involving even minor injuries are now being registered, which was not the case earlier.

"We must also consider infrastructure limitations and ongoing works, as they often contribute to accidents. In such cases, people seek FIRs to claim insurance, leading to an increase in reported numbers," the officer said.

Between 2011 and 2015, the city recorded 26,588 accident cases, with fatal accidents accounting for 13.64%, resulting in 3,770 deaths. Between 2016 and 2020, accident numbers stood at 21,671, with fatalities accounting for 14.79%, leading to 3,534 deaths. Between 2021 and 2025, fatal accidents accounted for 18.30% of total cases (21,671), resulting in 4,108 deaths.

The police point out that there was a policy change after 2020.

"Earlier, some self-accident cases were being booked as Unnatural Death Reports (UDRs), which led to the loss of insurance compensation. As a result, self-accidents are now being registered as FIRs," an officer said .

Another officer pointed to a decline in on-ground enforcement, leading to negligent driving, especially riding without helmets, between 2021 and 2025. He believes this also contributed to the increase in fatal accidents, as commuters feared enforcement less during these years.

Outskirts, a problematic equation

According to the data, the top five police stations witnessing fatal accidents are Yelahanka (49), Chikkajala (42), Electronics City (38), Devanahalli Airport (36), and K.R. Puram (30), all on the city's fringes. A senior officer from the northeast division said these jurisdictions have relatively free roads and highways, where speeding is a major concern leading to fatalities. He added that Yelahanka and K.R. Puram cover larger jurisdictions, where enforcement may be relatively limited, contributing to higher accident numbers.

"Stretches such as the airport road are signal-free, and many motorists indulge in speeding, leading to accidents. However, violations have reduced after the installation of cameras," he said.

This year, the traffic police plan to address issues scientifically by drawing up strategies after reviewing data and strengthening multi-department coordination. They believe the GBA could prove to be a game changer this year.

(This is the second of a three-part series, in which we look at trends and patterns in Bengaluru's traffic violations.)

Fact sheet

Year	Total accidents	Fatal	Killed	Non-fatal	Injured
2025	4,893	843	878	4,050	4,272
2024	4,769	869	894	3,900	4,022
2023	4,974	882	910	4,092	4,191
2022	3,822	752	772	3,070	3,189

The top five police stations that recorded fatal accidents in 2025

Police station	Fatal accidents
Yelahanka	49
Chikkajala	42
Electronics City	38
Devanahalli Airport	36
K.R. Puram	30

Till November 2025

Plaint against seven staff of IWST-ICFRE for securing jobs by fraudulent methods

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A complaint has been filed against seven employees of the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST) of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), who allegedly secured government jobs through impersonation and use of forged documents without personally appearing for the recruitment examinations.

They were six multi-tasking staff and a forest guard.

Director of the IWST Shakti Singh Chauhan, in his complaint, named seven employees identified as Dinesh- multi-tasking staff (MTS), (recruitment year 2019, exam held on December 10, 2018); Sudhir- MTS, (recruitment year 2022, exam held on April 24, 2022); Prince- MTS, (recruitment year 2022, exam held on April 24, 2022); Sonu- MTS, (recruitment year 2022, exam held on April 24, 2022); Parveen- MTS, (recruitment year 2022, exam held on April 24, 2022); Rajkumar- MTS, (recruitment year 2022, exam held on April 24, 2022), and Sunil Kumar Yadav- forest guard, (recruitment year 2023, exam held on January 22, 2023), seeking legal action against them.

The probe was initiated following a directive issued by the ICFRE Directorate on August 7, 2025 to all ICFRE institutions instructing to conduct a comprehensive review of recruitment-related documents.

During internal scrutiny at the IWST, discrepancies were noticed between the handwriting, signatures, attendance sheets, OMR answer sheets, admit cards and service records of the accused employees. As doubts intensified, the documents were forwarded to the State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL), Bengaluru, for expert examination.

The FSL report, dated December 10, 2025, conclusively established that the handwriting and signatures on the examination records did not match with those of the appointed employees, confirming that different individuals had appeared for the recruitment examinations.

The findings indicated that the accused employees allegedly used impersonators to clear competitive examinations and fraudulently secure government employment, amounting to serious criminal conspiracy, forgery, and violation of public recruitment norms.

Recruitment scam

Based on the forensic evidence, a criminal complaint has been lodged against the seven accused and unknown accomplices, seeking registration of cases and further investigation. The case is being viewed as a major recruitment scam within a central government institution.

Kannada writer Asha Raghu found dead

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Kannada publisher and writer Asha Raghu, 46, was found dead at her residence in Malleswaram on Saturday, police said.

She is survived by a daughter. Her husband, K.C. Raghu, passed away two years ago. Following his death, Asha was reportedly suffering from depression, the Malleswaram police said. They said her family members broke open the door when there was no response from Asha's room, and found her dead. A case of unnatural death has been registered.

((If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN at 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help.)

Drunk driver jumps median, crashes into restaurant

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Seven persons narrowly escaped after a speeding car rammed a road divider and crashed into a restaurant on 100 Feet Road in Indiranagar late on Thursday night. The entire incident was captured on CCTV footage. According to the Jeevan Bima traffic police, the accident occurred around 11.34 p.m. when an overspeeding car came from the 18th Main Road, Indiranagar. Instead of taking a left turn, the driver reportedly drove straight, rammed the divider before crashing into a hotel. The police said the car was driven by 42-year-old Derrick Tony, who was allegedly under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash. A group of young men and women were standing outside the hotel after finishing dinner. Upon hearing the loud noise when the car hit the divider, they quickly ran away, narrowly escaping injury. The police said the accident was caused by overspeeding and drunk driving, and that the car owner himself was driving the vehicle.

Police say Derrick Tony, 42, drove the car. He was allegedly under the influence of alcohol at the time of the incident

He sustained minor injuries and was admitted to the hospital. A case has been registered at the Jeevan Bima Nagar Traffic police station.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. SG-SWR-PROJ-UBL-MSDAC2 Dated : 08-01-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
SWR : Hubballi Division : Throughput enhancement and safety work by provision of reliable track detection with redundancy feature at Hubballi, Hosapete & Toranagallu Stations.	Rs. 39,12,99,418.60

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs on 30-01-2026
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Project-II/Hubballi
PUB/814/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. Y-E-29-2025-26-73 Dated : 05-01-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Outsourcing of OHE activities in MMEC Private Siding for a period of One Year.	Rs. 23,73,896.02

Last date for submission of bids: Upto 11:00 Hrs on 27-01-2026
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/ Traction Distribution/Mysuru
PUB/803/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26
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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 44 UBL 2025-26 Dated : 02.01.2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works.

Sl.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value
1	Hubballi Division : Proposed Construction of New running Room at Sindhanur .	Rs. 2,31,03,947/-
2	Hubballi Division : Improvements to Gates lodges toilet Road surface, Drinking water facilities and fencing etc, at Level crossings Hubballi-Gadag,Gadag-Badami and Hubballi-Karajgi Section under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Central /Hubballi Jurisdiction.	Rs. 1,08,12,997/-
3	Hubballi Division : Construction of side drain along the track from Km.608/000 - 608/700 in Belagavi-Desur section under Jurisdiction of Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Belagavi.	Rs. 80,03,213/-
4	Hubballi Division : Re-Guaging and greasing of normal track on curves between Castle Rock-Kulem section for a period of 24 Months.	Rs. 2,43,71,000/-
5	Hubballi Division : Proposed Construction of compound wall, retaining wall and laying approach road to the quarters at Sanvordem Railway Station	Rs. 97,23,359/-

Last date for submission of bids: Up to 11.00 Hours on 30-01-2026
For details log on : www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Co-ordination Hubballi
PUB/798/AAS/PRB/SWR/2025-26
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CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
ELECTRICAL WORK
The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, General, Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procurement website www.ireps.gov.in from reputed, experienced & Licensed Electrical contractors for the following works. **Tender No. SUR/L/T/2025/30. Name of work:-** Electrical General service portion of work in connection with Replacement of pipe line BBD pump house to KLBG filter plants & SDB pump house to SDB filter plants under ADEN/KLBG sub division in Solapur Division. **Estimated cost:-** ₹ 8,85,455.02, **Bid Security:-** ₹ 17,700.00/-, **Completion Period:-** 12 Months, **Validity of offer:-** 60 Days. **Tender No. SUR/L/T/2025/31. Name of work:-** Electrical General service portion of work in connection with Replacement of pipe line of Kunnor pump house at WD under ADEN/KLBG in Solapur Division, **Estimated cost:-** ₹ 16,51,789.15 /-, **Bid Security:-** ₹33,000,00/-, **Completion Period:-** 12 Months, **Validity of offer:-** 60 Days.
ANJ-08
Download UTS App for Tickets

PUBLIC NOTICE
BE KNOWN TO ALL that our client **Mr. SILAMBARASAN C** has intended to purchase the Property mentioned in the Schedule Property from its owner- **Smt. VASANTHA,** Wife of Mr. A. Munireddy, aged about 55 years, R/at No.82, 6th Cross, Brindavana Layout, Vijinapura, Dooravaninagar Post, Bangalore, Karnataka-560016 (Aadhaar No. 719321820978). If any person/s entity has/have any claim/objection in the matter of the intended sale of the Schedule Property or any part, thereof, such a person submit its/his/her/their claim/objection with documentary proof thereof to the undersigned in writing within **Seven (7) days** from the date of this notice, failing which it would be presumed that there are no claims/objections and our client shall proceed with the purchase of the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that piece and parcel of the residential property bearing **Site No. 82, Katha No. 1354**, Situated at **Vijinapura (Brindavan Layout, 6th Cross), K.R. Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk,** Now within the limits of Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), measuring **East to West 40 feet, North to South 30 feet,** totally measuring **1200 Square Feet,** consisting of 12 squares of ACC Sheet roofed house constructed with cement and bricks doors and windows made out of jungle wood with red oxide flooring with all civic amenities and bounded on the:
East By : 20 feet Road; West By : Sukumaran Nair House; North By : Lokesh House; South By : Site No. 83;
KRISHNAMURTHY. P, Advocate
No.11, 1st Floor, "MEERA NIVAS"
Opp: Sai Baba Temple, North Park Road, Seshadripuram, Bangalore-560 020.
Mob: 9740718436

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
भारत सरकार का उपक्रम
Union Bank of India
A Government of India Undertaking
Regional Office: 2254, "Kousalya", 3rd Floor, South Wing, Vinoba Road, Mysore - 570 005

POSSESSION NOTICE
(See Rule 8(1)Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Whereas, the Undersigned being the authorised officer of **Union Bank Of India, Regional Office, Mysuru** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Sec 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (Act No. 54 of 2002) to repay the amount together with the future interest. till payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/s, Guarantor/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sec 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on below mentioned date.

The Borrower/s and Guarantor/s in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the Union Bank of India, for an amount mentioned in the below column + interest and costs thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to the borrower to redeem the secured assets.

Kanakapura M G Road Branch, Opp. Govt Maternity Hospital, Main Road, Kanakapura - 562117
Ph: 9913265424, Mail Id: ubin0911747@unionbankofindia.bank.in

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgager	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Total Dues	Description of the Immovable Properties	Date of Possession Taken
1	1. **Mr. Venkatesha K** S/o Late Kempaiah #976, Old Street, Michel Road, Basaveshvaranagar, Kanakapura, Karnataka-562117 2. **Mrs. Geetha,** 976, Old Street, Michel Road, Basaveshvaranagar, Kanakapura, Karnataka-562117	**13-08-2025 & Rs. 11,56,922.97**	**Rs. 10,28,902 Plus Interest & Other Charges thereon)**	All The Part And Parcel Of Residential Land and Building In The Name Of **Mr. Venkatesha K, S/o Late Kempaiah** Bearing K.No 6148A/5625A, Situated At B.W.S.S.B West Portion, Maharajakatte Road North Portion, Ward No-16, Kanakpura Town, Kanakpura-562117.**Measuring East To West: 19.81 Meters, North To South: 16.76 Meters. Total 332.0156 Square meter i.e. 3575 Square feet, bounded By East:** Property Of Chikkaputtaiah And Master Honnegowda's House, **West:** 20' Road, **North:** Property Of Sy No-705 K Gowramma **South:** Nagarsabha Road.	**08-01-2026**

Date : 08-01-2026
Place : Mysuru
Sd/- Authorized Officer
Union Bank of India

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SOLAPUR DIVISION
ELECTRICAL WORK
The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, General, Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procurement website www.ireps.gov.in from reputed, experienced & Licensed Electrical contractors for the following works. **Tender No.** SUR/L/T/2025/26. **Name of work: -** Electrical general service portion of work in connection with Development of Greenfield Mega Railway Terminal at Tikekarwadi Railway station (Phase-1: - 2 Nos of Washing Cum Pit lines-750 Mtrs of Solapur Division. **Estimated cost:-** Rs. 37,43,368.33/- **Bid Security: -** Rs. 74,900/- **Completion Period: -** 12 Months **Validity of offer:-** 60 Days **Date & time of tender closing on website: -** 27/01/2026 at 15.00 hours. **Bid Security cost shall be paid through e-payment on www.ireps.gov.in website.**
ANJ-04
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WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
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('e' Tender Notice for the supply of Stores, No.EPS/115/2025)
PCMM/WCR on behalf of the President of India invites the following advertised tenders through E-procurement System. No manual/postal offers shall be entertained. Tenders can be accessed under the link website **"https://ireps.gov.in"** for details and for submission of Tender.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Short Description	Tendered Qty.	Due Date
1.	40252202B	Valve regulated lead acid single cell of 1100AH	53 Sets.	28/01/2026
2.	20254515B	Brake Shoe Complete	27020 Nos.	29/01/2026
3.	30255004A	Supply, Installation, testing & commissioning of IP based Video Surveillance System	1855 Sets	30/01/2026
4.	38252306	POH Kit for Distributor valve type	1615 Sets	09/02/2026
5.	40251835	Porcelain Bracket insulator	2111 Nos.	11/02/2026

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Finishing touches: At his home in Kathputli Nagar, an artisan ties strings to some *Kathputli* puppets.

Age-old tunes: An artist sings during a *Kathputli* performance by a group of men inside the Hawa Mahal.

Peas of the same pod: Outside a house in the area, a pair of fully finished puppets are kept side by side.

Curious onlookers: People click photographs during the *Kathputli* performance in Hawa Mahal.

Hanging on: Beside digital characters, some of these handmade dolls compete for attention in a busy street near the Hawa Mahal in Jaipur.

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A BG-BGE

State govt. plans more medical colleges

It has decided to submit a proposal for the colleges in Ramanagara of Bengaluru South district and in Bagalkot

Jayanth R.
BENGALURU

The State government has decided to submit a proposal for new government medical colleges in Ramanagara of Bengaluru South district and Bagalkot this year.

Also, due to lack of necessary infrastructure, the proposal for a government medical college in Kanakapura of Bengaluru South district was not submitted this year.

The medical colleges for Ramanagara and Kanakapura have remained as a hope for the last three years because of the lack of necessary infrastructure, including teaching and non-teaching recruitment. The National Medical Commission (NMC) had denied permission to start the colleges in 2023-24 and 2024-2025.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Minister for Medical Education Sharan Prakash Patil held a meeting with the department officials and instructed them to make necessary preparations for the start of the new medical colleges in Ramanagara and Kanakapura and submit a request to the NMC.

The government medical colleges have been instructed to submit a proposal for additional medical seats this year too. FILE PHOTO

But, in 2025-26 too, a request was submitted without proper infrastructure and appointment of necessary teaching staff. Therefore, the NMC had rejected the proposals. The State government decided to construct a medical college and hospital in Kanakapura at a cost of about ₹550 crore and gave administrative approval in October 2025. A tender has been floated for the construction work.

Construction works

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr. Patil said, "It has been decided to submit a request to the NMC for the opening of medical colleges in Ramanagara and Bagalkot this year. Around 50% of the construction works on the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) new campus in Ramanagara has been completed and remaining work will be completed in seven months. In addition, there is a district hospital with a capacity of about 300 beds for the opening of a medical college." A tender has been called for a medical college in Bagalkot at a cost of ₹450 crore. Here too, a medical college would be opened next year using the district hospital, he added.

NMC rules

Although administrative approval has been given for the construction of a medical college in Kanakapura, there is a shortage of a hospital.

As per the NMC rules, a minimum of 220-bedded hospital is required for a new medical college and 50 seats will be sanctioned.

"Due to lack of infrastructure, we have decided not to submit a proposal for the opening of a new medical college in Kanakapura this year. After the completion of the construction works, a proposal will be submitted to the NMC," the Minister said.

Action for recruitment

The Minister also said that the government has taken steps to make the necessary recruitment for the opening of new medical colleges. "Currently, the High Court has issued a stay order against making any new recruitment owing to internal reservation. But we are doing contractual recruitment. The officials have been instructed to get approval from the Finance Department for the posts required for new medical colleges and make preparations. The recruitment process will be completed soon after the High Court's final verdict," he said.

Medical seats enhancement

In addition, the government medical colleges have been instructed to submit a proposal for additional medical seats this year too.

"Last time, the NMC had sanctioned a total of 450 undergraduate and 421 postgraduate medical seats. This year too, colleges with good infrastructure have been instructed to submit proposals for seats enhancement," he said.

The big cat was trapped in a cage placed in one of the fields at the village. FILE PHOTO

Nanjedevanapura tigress captured

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The tigress that was recently sighted along with her four cubs in agricultural fields at Nanjedevanapura village in Chamarajanagar district was captured on Friday, providing temporary relief to residents of surrounding villages.

The big cat, estimated to be around eight years old, was trapped in a cage placed in one of the fields at the village at around 8 a.m. Forest officials rushed to the spot immediately after receiving an alert and informed the director of the B.R. Hills Tiger Reserve.

Members of the Standard Technical Guidance and Monitoring Committee, along with veterinarians, reached the site and conducted a medical examination of the tigress. A statement issued by the B.R. Hills Tiger Reserve director confirmed that the captured tigress was the same wild cat sighted earlier with her four cubs.

Efforts are now under way to trace and safely capture the cubs.

Forest authorities have urged farmers and villagers not to venture out of their homes at night and visit fields only if necessary, using adequate lighting such as torches.

They have sought the cooperation of local residents in the ongoing operation and appealed to them not to gather in large numbers, but instead promptly inform officials if the cubs are sighted.

As part of the operation, thermal cameras and drones are being deployed to monitor the movement of the animals in the area.

Main line testing on Pink Line to begin today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The rolling stock type tests on the Pink Line corridor between Kalena Agrahara and Tavarekere, covering a stretch of 7.5 km, will be conducted from January 11 and is planned to be completed by mid-April.

Important activity

A Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (BMRCL) release said on Saturday that this main line testing is a vital activity prior to commissioning involving comprehensive validation of train performance and system integration under actual field conditions to obtain statutory approvals.

Tests to be conducted

"During the above-mentioned period, traction and brake type tests, oscillation trials at various speeds, integration tests with signals, power and telecommunication systems among others will be conducted," the release added.

Mobility, pollution, housing, and access to basic services shape Bengaluru's health, say experts

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Mobility, pollution, housing, access to basic services, and the availability of public spaces – issues usually discussed as civic concerns – are now driving public health outcomes in Bengaluru, said speakers at the second edition of Bengaluru Debates, a quarterly dialogue series held on Saturday.

Health in cities is increasingly being determined long before people enter hospitals or clinics, and is linked to how cities are planned, built, and governed, said the participants.

The quarterly dialogue series is aimed at fostering informed public debate by bringing together citizens, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society actors. It is hosted by the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) and Janaagraha.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao participating virtually in the Bengaluru Debates at the Bengaluru International Centre on Saturday. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the city's rapid expansion had brought lifestyle stress, long commutes, pollution, and pressure on water systems, all of which were contributing to a rise in non-communicable diseases and mental health challenges. Strengthening urban public healthcare and preventive screening will be a priority, he said. C.N. Ashwath Narayan, former Deputy Chief Minister and MLA, said Bengaluru has made advances in healthcare innovation but prevention remains weak. Many of the city's health problems stem from lifestyle risks and environmental exposure, which can be addressed early through education, public planning, and primary care, he said.

Janaagraha CEO Srikanth Viswanathan said Bengaluru fares worse than other cities on obesity, diabetes, and hypertension.

These patterns, he said, are linked to how neighbourhoods are designed and how services are delivered. The formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority has offered an opportunity to make public health central to planning decisions, he added. Shreelata Rao Seshadri, professor and director, Ramalingaswami Centre for Equity and Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Foundation of India, said migration, climate stress, and informal labour have placed pressure on both civic and health systems. Air pollution, congestion, and deteriorating basic services are now contributing to respiratory and cardiac risks, while affordable care is becoming increasingly out of reach for both the poor and middle class, she said. A focus on health equity is needed to protect the most vulnerable.

Economist and health systems researcher Nachiket Mor said cities become healthy not through hospitals alone but through multiple systems- housing, mobility, ecology, governance, public space, and social life- reinforcing each other over time.

Provide education that meets industry expectations: VTU V-C

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

"If 48,000 engineering graduates have registered for Yuva Nidhi, the State's guarantee scheme, then professors must introspect about the kind of education we are providing. Reduce the creation of unemployed youth," said S. Vidyashankar, Vice-Chancellor of Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU).

Disappointing trend

Inaugurating the 'Students Induction Program (SIP)' at Global Academy of Technology on Saturday, he said, "It is truly disappointing that 48,000 engineering graduates have registered for Yuva Nidhi. This raises questions about the education we are imparting. Wake up at least now and provide education that meets industry expectations." Skill-based education must be our goal. Bring down the number of 48,000 students to zero, he added. "Understand the truth that only when students take admission, you will have work. Treat students with affection. Implement VTU's programmes keeping students' welfare in mind. Give greater importance to innovation," he stated.

On allegations regarding internships, he said, "We are determined to stop illegal practices under the guise of internships. Our intention is that everyone should obtain internships only through VTU."

Nagamani Nagaraj, Chief Strategy Officer of Global Academy of Technology, said, "From the beginning itself, you must instill discipline in students' learning. Otherwise, you must be prepared to face problems in the coming years. Students must be given skill-based education. Along with a learning atmosphere, we must also create a joyful environment on campus."

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, JAN. 11		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:10
RISE	00:26	SET 12:20
MONDAY, JAN. 12		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:11
RISE	01:14	SET 12:59
TUESDAY, JAN. 13		
RISE	06:45	SET 18:11
RISE	02:02	SET 13:40

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	29	20
Mysuru	27	16
Bengaluru	26	15

Bengaluru Today
26°C The weather will be dry. Day will be comfortable. Night will be cool and hazy.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
25°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be pleasant. Night also will be cool. Dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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LITERARY TRIVIA CHALLENGE

1. Which Tamil novelist's works, including Ponniyin Selvan, were nationalised by the Tamil Nadu government in 1998 during his birth centenary celebrations?
2. Which poem by Rudyard Kipling has its lines displayed at India's National Defence Academy, Wimbledon's Centre Court, and the former US Open venue at Forest Hills?
3. Which World Cup–winning Australian cricket captain wrote the autobiography Out of My Comfort Zone?

*T&C apply.

Scan QR code or visit https://newsth.live/LFLQUIZ to take the quiz. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. George Bernard Shaw | 2. Richard Bach | 3. Kabali

Yesterday's Winners:
1. S A. Krishna Pillai, Chennai | 2. Jaiveer Singh, Ludhiana
3. M.A.Risna, Gudalur

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that our client has negotiated to purchase the Schedule Property from its present owners who are legal heirs of **Late V. Kannan1)Mrs.N.SHASHIKALA, 2)Mr.K.Karthic &3)Mrs.Swetha.K, Wife/Children of Late V. Kannan, who had acquired the Schedule Property from the BDA under an Absolute Sale Deed Dated 14-02-2019.**
Any person/s having or claiming any manner of right, title, claim lien or interest in the Schedule Property may intimate the same in writing to the undersigned along with documentary evidence in support of their claim **within 15 days** from the date of this publication, failing which, our client will be advised to proceed with the conveyance as if no valid claims are subsisting against the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of Vacant Residential Site bearing No.524, in Sy No.27,Situated at **18th Block, Arkavathi Layout, Bhairati Khane Village, Bangalore** and bounded on the:
East by : Road; West by : Site bearing No.518;
North by : Site bearing No.523 South by : Site bearing No.525.
MEASURING:- **East to West : 24.00 Meters; North to South :15.00 Meters; Totally Measuring 360.00 Square Meters.**

(S.A.H. RAZVI & ARIF PASHA)Advocates
No.60, 2nd floor, M.M. Complex, Chinnaswamy Mudaliar Road, Tasker Town, Bangalore-560 051 Mob: **9845049766 / 9243132714**
Dated:11.01.2026 Bangalore

CAUTION NOTICE

We, Shiva & Shiva Orthopaedic Hospital Private Limited, have obtained a site bearing Municipal Nos. 4/1 and 4/2 (being part of converted land bearing Sy. No. 70), Jalahalli Ward, Tumkur Road, together with the building thereon, on a lease basis under a Lease Deed dated 05/05/2014, executed by Ms. Nagson & Company and others, and registered as Document No. 548/2014–15 in Book-I ("the said Registered Lease Deed").

Notice is hereby given that the original of the said Registered Lease Deed has been misplaced/lost and is not traceable.

Any person who finds the said document is requested to return the same to the undersigned.

The public is hereby informed not to deal with or carry out any transaction based on the missing document.

If any person has any claim in respect of the missing document, the same may be lodged in writing with the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 10 January 2026

Mr. Prashant Hegde
Authorized Representative
Shiva & Shiva Orthopaedic Hospital Private Limited
Registered Office: No. 146, Infantry Road, Bengaluru – 560 001
E-mail: legal@sparshhospital.com

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR.
I.F.T.No:EE/PWD/VJP/PB/5054-MDR Bridge/2025-26/4082
Dated:09.01.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(E-Procurement) (3rd CALL)

The- **Executive Engineer, Public Works Dept. Division, Vijayapur** Invites tenders from eligible tenderers (registered in Public Work Department) 01 work, As per standard bid documents KW-4 with head of accounts 5054-03-101-0-02-132 (MDR Bridge) and **Work Indent-22334/Call-3** costing of amount for Rs. **4450.00/-** Lakhs, and the EMD amount of Rs. **44,50,000/-** for the work. Increase in G.S.T shall not be paid in the extended period of Contract for which the contractor alone is responsible for delay as determined by the authority while granting the extension of time. The calendar events of tenders, dates are fixed as follows **1)** Pre-Bid Meeting Date:**16.01.2026 at 11.00 AM 2)** Last Date for Receipt of Tenders Date- **22.01.2026 upto 4.30 PM. 3)** Opening of Technical Bid Date-**23.01.2026 at 4.31 PM 4)** Opening of Financial Bid Date- **27.01.2026 at 11.00 AM.** Clause-3 Conditions of Standard Bid Document may be seen in Departmental Website i.e "**www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**" and for more information may contact help desk Bangalore (Phone No. 918025501216 & 918025501227) or office of the undersigned

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Vijayapur

DIPR/VIJAYAPURA/607/KSMCA/2025-26

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

READER CONNECT INITIATIVE

SIDDARAMAIAH'S

Five Guarantees: Economic Empowerment to the Masses

When Welfare Becomes Governance: Lessons from Karnataka's Five Guarantees

India stands at an inflection point in how it imagines welfare. In most democracies, welfare is defensive - a safety net deployed when markets fail. In India's emerging model, visible most clearly in Karnataka under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, welfare is productive, structural and transformative. This shift matters not because one man has governed for as long as another, but because what he has done in office challenges the terms on which we debate poverty, dignity, and development itself.

On January 6, 2026, Siddaramaiah equalled Devaraj Urs record as Karnataka's longest-serving Chief Minister. The milestone invites comparison across four decades. Mr. Ur's pioneered structural reform - caste enumeration through the Havanur Commission, land-to-tiller policies, bonded labor abolition, reservation expansion - that shattered the political monopoly of dominant castes and created institutional space for AHINDA communities (Minorities, Backward Classes, Dalits). Mr. Urs asked: how

The intellectual shift is subtle but profound: welfare is no longer defensive charity but productive investment in human capability that simultaneously stimulates consumption through a 52,000 crore annual expenditure generating 4.5% GSDP multiplier effects. Also, direct cash transfers reduce poverty, stimulate consumption, enhance female participation, and maintain fiscal sustainability at approximately 7% of the state budget.

do we restructure power? Siddaramaiah inherited that restructured space and asked a different question: how do we fill it with material resources that translate institutional inclusion into actual economic capability?

The Five Guarantees emerged from this philosophy. Gruha Lakshmi - direct cash transfers to 1.4 crore women household heads - seems simple but functions as revolutionary. It recognises that institutional representation means little if women lack economic autonomy within households. Anna Bhagya's 10 kilograms rice to 1.5 crore families addresses what decades of public distribution systems failed to solve: assured food security that transformed childhood malnutrition and, consequently, educational outcomes.

Gruha Jyoti's free electricity to 95% of households eliminated a grinding daily burden. Rural and urban poor households that spent 8-15% of income on energy now invest that freed-up spending in children's education, health, and small enterprise. Yuva Nidhi's monthly stipend to 4 lakh unemployed graduates operates as a buffer - allowing youth to invest in skill development rather than accept panic-driven low-wage employment that forecloses better futures. It is not employment guarantee but capability guarantee: the state says your human capital matters enough to fund its development.

Shakti - free bus travel for women - proved most philosophically illuminating. Between June 2023 and December 2025, Karnataka's women made 700 crore bus journeys, earning world record recognition. Critics dismiss this as "freebie"; beneficiaries understand it differently:

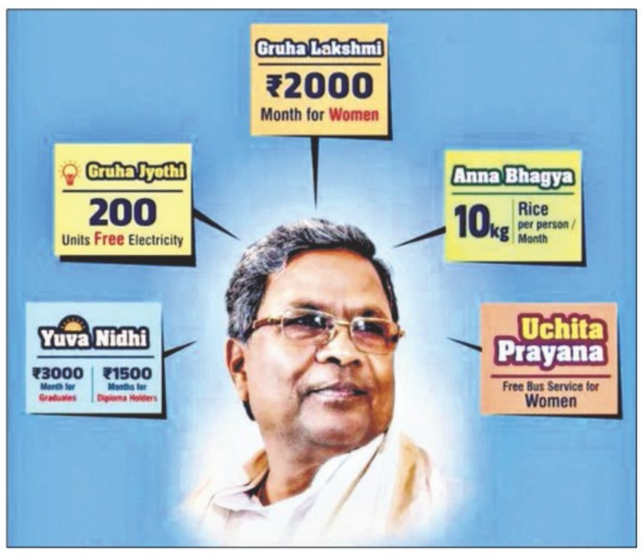
*A domestic worker in Bengaluru can now attend skill development classes in distant neighbourhood's without calculating transportation costs against daily wages.

*A farmer's daughter can commute to a factory job in a town 40km away.

*A widow can visit her son in a neighbouring district without depleting household savings. This is not transportation subsidy; it is infrastructure enabling economic participation.

Impacts measurable across all metrics

The impact has been measurable across all metrics that matter. Poverty declined 12% (NSSO data), rural-to-urban distress migration fell 15%, female workforce participation surged 23% in Bengaluru and 21% in Hubli-Dharwad. Schools reported improved attendance as Shakti reduced transportation barriers. Malnutrition rates halved as Anna Bhagya ensured reliable rice supply. Yet aggregates obscure the granular human reality.



Consider Tumkur district, where a 58-year-old widow managing three grandsons on marginal farming income receives Gruha Lakshmi 2,000 monthly is quantitatively modest; qualitatively, it transforms her from an invisible economic actor to decision-maker in household resource allocation. Anna Bhagya eliminated the painful monthly calculus and budgeting: feed or educate? Gruha Jyoti allowed her granddaughter evening tuition under electric light. When her daughter-in-law secured a job in Bengaluru's textile sector, moving away from her village-level informal labour, Shakti gave her mobility. It is a classic example of three schemes transforming the economic trajectory and quality of living of a poor family.

Or look at this example. In urban Belgaum, where a 24-year-old BBA graduate from a Dalit background used Yuva Nidhi's 3,000 monthly stipend to enroll in a course in digital marketing certification. Without this buffer, she would have accepted the first job offer at 12,000 monthly. Within 18 months, she secured 25,000 monthly employment—a trajectory impossible without state-backed capability investment. Her mother, a domestic worker receiving Gruha Lakshmi, invested in vegetable wholesale while maintaining wage employment flexibility. Welfare spawned entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.

BJP implemented or promised similar schemes in a bunch of states

What proves philosophically significant is that this welfare model - dismissed by critics as unsustainable "freebies" - has become mainstream electoral and governance currency across India. The BJP, harshly critical of Karnataka's guarantees, implemented or promised similar schemes in every single state that has seen polls after Karnataka, including Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Odisha. This replication signals something fundamental: targeted universal benefits now outperform means-tested welfare in both political durability and economic effectiveness. The guarantees model has become India's dominant welfare paradigm.

The intellectual shift is subtle but profound

Telangana's government adopted Karnataka's blueprint. Even the Modi government's PM-Kisan and employment schemes acknowledge that unconditional income support works. The intellectual shift is subtle but profound: welfare is no longer defensive charity but productive investment in human capability that simultaneously stimulates consumption through a 52,000 crore annual expenditure generating 4.5% GSDP multiplier effects.

This realisation elevates what once seemed fringe - Universal Basic Income - to mainstream policy discourse. Rahul Gandhi's 2019 minimum income proposal, dismissed as impractical, has gained credibility through Karnataka's lived experiment. Direct cash transfers reduce poverty, stimulate consumption, enhance female participation, and maintain fiscal sustainability at approximately 7% of the state budget. As global economies confront job displacement through automation, as gig-economy proliferation undermines stable employment, as wealth concentration deepens, UBI shifts from utopian proposal to governance's logical evolution. Tamil Nadu's explorations, and Karnataka's demonstrable proof have normalised what seemed impossible five years ago.

The deeper lesson

Karnataka has moved beyond Urs era of institutional restructuring into welfare delivery at scale. Urs created space for AHINDA advancement; Siddaramaiah filled that space with material resources translating opportunity into capability. Neither approach alone suffices.

Together, they represent Congress's most coherent attempt to realise Constitutional Directive Principles - particularly Articles 38, 39, and 46 mandating social order, economic justice, and weaker section protection.

The tenure parity matters not as personal achievement but as indication that sustained, progressive governance produces results. Results compounded show that women's participation generates role models accelerating participation; malnutrition decline produces healthier cohorts with higher cognitive and earning capacity; rural migration decline keeps human capital in-state; youth skill investment yields labor force quality transformations.

As 2026 unfolds with elections across states, 5 Guarantees model will shape political competition

Karnataka's achievement - combining institutional inclusion (Urs legacy) with material empowerment (Siddaramaiah's contribution) - defines India's emerging welfare discourse.

As 2026 unfolds with elections across states, the Five Guarantees model will shape political competition.

The question is no longer whether welfare is affordable but how to design it for productive transformation. Karnataka has provided the answer through lived experience rather than theory. That lesson transcends individuals and tenure records. It reshapes how democracies imagine their obligations to citizens.

Mehroz Khan,
Vice Chairman of
5 Guarantees Authority,
Government of Karnataka

In Karnataka, welfare is productive, structural and transformative. Here what critics dismiss as "freebie"; beneficiaries understand it differently. Welfare schemes spawned entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. The impact has been measurable across all metrics that matter, in the state. Poverty declined 12% (NSSO data), rural-to-urban distress migration fell 15%, female workforce participation surged 23% in Bengaluru and 21% in Hubli-Dharwad. Schools reported improved attendance as Shakti reduced transportation barriers. Malnutrition rates halved as Anna Bhagya ensured reliable rice supply.

Classifieds

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LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED
BRIDES WANTED
BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED
Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms
ASSAMESE
AWADHI
BENGALI
BHOJPURI
BIHARI
CHHATTISGARHI
ENGLISH
GUJARATI
HARYANI
HINDI
KANNADA
KASHMIRI
KONKANI
MALAYALAM
MANIPURI
MARATHI
MARWARI
NEPALI
ORIYA
PARSI
PUNJABI
SAURASHTRA
SINDHI
TAMIL
TELUGU
TULU
URDU
ADVOCATE
BUSINESS
DEFENCE
DOCTOR
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IAS/ ALLIED SERVICES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
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PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED
MARRIAGE BUREAUS
WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

DIVORCEE

HINDU NADAR, 41 years, 158cm, wheatish, Divorcee, B. Tech; M.S. in Life Science (USA), Freelancer, only daughter of a retired ISRO Scientist, well settled in Chennai, seeks well qualified professional groom, divorcee without kids, employed/business, same caste, good family. Contact: WA 9444895863.

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-0908-

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MALAYALAM

NAIR GIRL,92BORN,MBBS,ATHAM,CHENNAI settled,kindly watsapp profile 9042526302

HINDU-VISWAKARMA PARENTS seeks suitable alliance for daughter, 27 yrs, MBBS, pursuing MD, height 157 cms, well-cultured and family-oriented, seeking PG Doctors/ Engineers/ Other Professionals Hindu grooms of age group 27-32. Caste No Bar. Never married. Alliance from respectable families preferred. Contact: ptsukumar@gmail.com.

HINDU NAIR girl (1/3/2002, 5:15 am, Uthram), Trivandrum, Kerala, studying MBA at Melbourne, Australia and also working in logistics company. Preferring NRI's Also without horoscope. Ph: 9526364446.

EZHAVA GIRL 31, MS, Gynec (Govt. College) 28.10.1994, fair, upper middle class, proposals from Doctors / Professionals. Ph: 8281425422.

ALLIANCE FROM Malayalee unmarried allopathy Doctor groom for unmarried Hindu spinster69 looks young 9495621351

TAMIL

CANADIAN CITIZEN Christian Bride 29 yrs, 159cm, is looking for God Fearing, Family Oriented, Canadian or American Citizen. Age 30–35, Professional, have Biblical values and Faith. Email Profile and Photo to rvjplanning@gmail.com 9677181606

36/154CMS CHRISTAN girl Born Again SC AD/ M.Ed/ Working in Chennai 25Kpm/ Own house seeks suitable groom below 40 yrs. Ct: 7339432540

CHRISTIAN CSI 42, Divorce seeks working professional, God fearing Christian–educated family. 8939896578

CHRISTIAN, 36, MBA, rich & affluent. 8137003550

CHRISTIAN, 24, BSc, rich & affluent. 8138900470

HINDU, 33, castenobar, NRI, BE, 10 crores, 7356483111

COMPUTER / INFO.TECH

WE ARE looking for an alliance for our daughter Miss. Shanmugapriya, aged 28 years (DOB: 01–11–1997), residing in Chennai, height 170cm, B,E, working with Deloitte, ERP, SD, 16 Lakhs/annum, Hindu, Tirunelveli Saiva Pillai, Visakam star, Thulam Rasi, Maharam Laknam. The groom should hail from same caste, well groomed, family oriented, career focused, aged between 28 & 30 years. Contact with details +91 98403 15397, cramsgd@yahoo.co.in

COSMOPOLITAN

ATTRACTIVE, TALENTED 35, well–educated professional (LSR; UK Master's). Seeks compatible groom. Religion/caste no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

YADAVA (TAMIL,CHENNAI) 29/155 cm LLM (IIT) Presently Hyderabad Employed,Seeks Professional Grooms Civil Services / Defence.CNB.Ct. 8754441141

DIVORCEE

BEAUTIFUL, SINCERE 29, well–educated professional (MNC). Loving, cultured family. Seeks compatible groom. Caste no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

TAMIL

40/163CMS CHRISTIAN girl Born Again Christian SC AD/ M.B.A/ Not working/ Own house seeks suitable groom below 45 yrs. Ct: 7339432540

CHRISTIAN, 29, ME, 50 lakhs, VIP, 8137003549

BORN AGAIN Christian, 44yrs/152, MBBS, MD doctor, seeks christian groom, Chennai. CT – 9500188067

WANTED BRIDEGROOM Second Marriage Age 28 years Height 5'6" Religion Muslim Native Tirunelveli Current Location Urapakkam, Chennai Contact: 7871393304

SEEKING NEVER Married Tamil/Telugu Groom age (43–44)working in Chennai/US for Naidu Bride–SWE. Yamini.hari@gmail.com/ 9445270312/ 9962805093

RICH MUDALIYAR, 31yrs B.Tech,MBA, Industrial background in Chennai, Seeks Suitable Groom Cont: 6385293227

VANIYA CHETTIAR, 46/157, Rohini, M.Sc., TNGFS Department Officer. seeks equally Qualified Employed Groom. Contact: 94452 07116

Hindu, 30, pillai, B.tech, 10 crores, 8137003550

HINDU, 28, caste nobar, ME, 50 lakhs, 9072777822

HINDU, 28, Mudaliyar, BE, 20crores, 8138009235, VIP

YADHAVA/1990 BORN/ Govt Job / PSU–Health Care / 8.00 LPA/Veg/Caste no bar in BC or OBC. CT:9597459651 or 9443985816.

HINDU, 28, widow, B.L, caste no bar, 7356483111

HINDU, 29, caste no bar, ME, 40 lakhs. 8138900537

HINDU SOURASHTRA Girl of Anusham, Viruchigam, Cleared MRCS Currently Surgical Registrar @ NHS, UK of 29/ 163cm /64 kg, Fair & Slim Needs Groom Working/Settled in UK. 9486869995

AFFLUENT HINDU business family from Bangalore seeks suitable match for their daughter (1989 born), good-looking, working in Paris with a French bank. Seeking well-educated, handsome South Indian groom, well-mannered with good values. WhatsApp: 98454 89161/ Email: vyjayanthimala1960@gmail.com

MUDALIAR 24/ V.Fair, BE, MS, Father Business, Chennai, Elite Family, seeks groom Business/Eng–8925019776

SAMBAVAR, 29/165, M.Arch (Landscape), wheatish, Consultant Architect, affluent, Class 1 Contractor in PWD, seeks suitable teetotaler bridegroom from good family background, Contact: 99948 93631, 94443 27412

SC (AD), 27yrs, M.Tech, Well Educated Family background in Chennai, Seeks Suitable Groom Ct: 6385293227

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar, 26yrs, BDS, Elite business family in Chennai. Contact: 9380791999, 9841329471

GROOM WANTED Rich Naidu, 35yrs, MBBS, MS, Elite Industrial background in Chennai Caste No Bar. 6385293227

MUDALIAR 25, BE, MBA 160cm Good Looking, Well Settled Family Seeks Groom CNB Ct. 8778514465 / 7200866346

SEEKING ABROAD Grooms Only For 48yrs. Divorcee With No Issues Dr.Tamil, Hindu. CNB. Contact: 9790124427

HINDU, 25, Divorced, Chettiyar, MBA, 20 lakhs. 8137003550

HINDU, 28, Tamil speaking Naidu, Bsc, 30 lakhs. 8138900412

HINDU, 34, NRI, BE, caste no bar, 10 crores. 8137001255

HINDU, 32, VIP, NRI, caste no bar, 30 crores. 7356483111

HINDU SCA 30, B.Sc (CS), second Marriage have a child boy 5years need a clean habits Groom.CT: 9994284675

BRIDE GROOM WANTED
Tamil Maruthuvar, BBA, LLB(Hons), 24 years, 155cm, Very Fair, Good Looking, Working in Corporate, Parents State Government Officers,
Looking for well Qualified Professionals with Good Family Background, Same Caste Contact with Horoscope, Photo/Profile
WhatsApp only:
9841262160

TAMIL

BRIDE GROOM WANTED
Hindu Nadar MBBS, MD, 29 Years, Fair and Good looking from Kanyakumari District Reputed well to do family
Looking for well qualified professionals, Doctors, Class 1 officers same Cast Contact with Horoscope, Photograph and profile
Contact :
9498017788

MUDALIAR GOOD Looking Well–to–do Graduate girl, 29. Seeks Good looking Groom. No Doctor / Foreign Settled. Ct: 044– 2433 8939

MUDALIAR (CNB) 26/ V.Fair, B.E, MS, MNC, Sr.Analyst, Chennai, Decent pay, well settled family, seeks groom India / Abroad – 9962530015

BRIDES WANTED

BENGALI

Bengali Boy 27 Years / LPA 21 seeks Educated Smart Bong Girl (M) Contact - 9839187701.

COSMOPOLITAN

DM– DOCTOR (Tamil, Dec91, 185 cm, Kongu Vellalar, Hastham, affluent) , wkg in Bangalore, seeks a tall, v.fair, virtuous PG Doctor / non medico bride.(28–31 years) Any language / FC–BC castes. Parents:93425–29547 / 9072118800

US BASED Professor 47/174, Eggetarian, Divorcee (No kids) & green card holder from a reputed family of S.India living in Oklahoma seeks a good, educated Hindu bride living in US. Preferably citizen or green card holder. Contact: 94470 18822

29, HINDU, IITM. HSEE Post graduate, Entrepreneur, well settled, earning min 36 Lac P.A., Seeks well educated, Broad minded/outlook, independent, career–oriented bride (doctor/dentist/CA/architect/self–employed professional) to settle in Coimbatore. Caste no bar. CT: 8056145620

HINDI

AGARWAL BOY, 29yrs, Bank Job, 36 LPA package, underwent kidney transplant, health now perfectly ok, seek suitable bride. CT: 6230198418

MALAYALAM

VISWAKARMA (C) Boy, 34/170, Pooram, MTech. PhD, IIT Madras, seeks alliance from qualified girls from educated families. Caste no bar. 9495363050, 8089795318

NRI

SMART, MATURE 27, 178cm, ambitious EU–based professional (double Master's). Affluent Christian family. Seeks compatible bride. Community/ language no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

TAMIL HINDU 55 yrs, 173cm BSc, MBA, IT Proff, Australia, Divorce. Seeks Bride, WhatsApp: +61422909407

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN NADAR 1st Marriage 53/ 174 MPhil GovtOficer 30L & 52/170 PhD Prof House@Chennai. Seek upto 45 FC/BC Educate Professional 9444032498

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KONGU VELLALA GOUNDER, 29, 185 cms, Entrepreneur, MS. Lives in Chennai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from the similar community. Contact: 6366448344

VANNIYAR, 36, 175 cms, MS. Lives in USA. Father is a working professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from similar community in USA. Contact: 6366448344

PILLAI, CASTE NO BAR, 37, 158 cms, MS, Working Professional. Lives in USA. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from USA. Contact: 6366448344

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

KAMMA, 25, 168 cms, MBA, Entrepreneur. Father has multiple Business. Business class family. Looking for a like minded match from Business background from similar Kamma Naidu from Tamil Nadu. Contact: 6366448343

NADAR, 33, 180 cms, Business in Madurai, ICFAI. Lives in Mumbai. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from Nadar caste only. Contact: 6366448343

DEVAR, 27, 180 cms, Bachelors in Law, Advocate. Father is a Working Professional. Family is affluent lives in Chennai. Looking for a like minded match from Devar community in TamilNadu. Contact: 6366448343

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TAMIL

MUDALIAR 25/160 Fair, BE.MBA Businessman's only daughter Elite Family 100.Cr, CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

PILLAI GIRL 29 YRS / 160 / N. VEG / B. TECH - MEM - IVY LEAGUE USA, LIVES IN NEW YORK / H1B, WORKING WITH TOP 5
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Mudaliar, 29, Fair complexion 154cm, Family oriented Girl from Upper Middle class, Chennai, seeks groom from Govt employed, Software professionals or well settled from Reputed family. Contact: 94449 35026/ 94445 47499.

TELUGU

✔ **LOOKING FOR Groom, US citizen, Hyderabad Telugu 34/176cm, wheatish, MBA, Data Sci PhD, govt job, divorced, SC, well settled. Seeking well educational, settled boy. Caste no bar. Global Matches. Ct: 92475 04919.**

SEEKS BRIDE GROOM for Naidu age 39/172 MSc divorce no children upper middle class. Seeks well settled equal groom. Cell No. 9842470621.

44 Yrs /165cm/ SWE/ Bengaluru. OC/ Caste no bar. seeks Engineer/Doctor/ Professional Groom. Ct: 9182734077

NAIDU 25/160 Fair, Beautiful, BE, MBA, Father doing Business, Elite, 60.Cr CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

NAIDU Girl 28/160, B.E Civil, working in Software, seeks Groom from Telugu speaking chennai only.Ct: 8925731888

URDU

✔ **SUNNI MUSLIM** Mumbai based Urdu speaking Religious family seeking Groom from India or abroad for their only daughter (32 years) B.F.M., CFA Level 2, Digital Marketing Professional,Fair, Good looking. Contact : +91 – 7977313228

DIVORCEE

GOUNDER AGE 50/163cm,B.Com Fair Govt Sal:80K.Pm Need Any Govt, well Settled Bride No Age Limit 9842941182

SEEKING A Partner for a Peaceful Next Innings, a 61–year–old retired Engineer who believes that lifes best chapters can happen now. I am a divorcee living a quiet, disciplined life and value mental peace above all else. Looking for a lady (divorcee/widow) to share walks, conversations, and a stress–free life. Ct: 63857 54610.

SINCERE WIDOWER 45, 179cm, well–read (IIT alum), successful professional. Seeks compatible bride. Religion/caste no bar. Call/WA 93456 34365

IYER DIVORCEE Boy 51yrs S/W Professional with high salary seeks graduate girl from good family without issues caste no bar simple marriage no demands Ct: 9841672014.

DOCTOR

MUSLIM BOY MBBS 174/29, J.R., Govt. Medical College, Father Rtd. Dist. Officer, Mother Rtd. Deputy Director (Higher Secondary Edn.), reputed family Kollam, Kerala. 9995838247

33 Doctor MD mutual divorcee inter-caste Hindu - Christian Caste No Bar. Seeks Doctor UG / PG or other professional degree willing to live in Trichy city. No expectation. Contact : 98430 75979.

Christian, 37 yrs Old Boy MBBS/MD (Radiology) Seeking Educated, Professional Girl. Contact: (080-69129296)

ENGINEER

Born again Christian Nadar Parents, Honest Well Educated Well Settled Cultured and Civilised, Solicit Alliance for their Son 29/174 Master of Engineering from CEG Anna University and ADA Fellowship, Engineer AirBus from Intelligent Engineer / Doctor of Good Christian family. Parents ALONE Contact: 9840718865.

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Bangalore. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN, Born again, NRI, VVIP, 100 Crores, 8138900316,

CHRISTIAN, 31, divorced, MD, Doctor, 50 lakhs, caste/religion no bar. 8137003549

CHRISTIAN, 27, UK, MBA, 30 crores, fair. 8138900652

CHRISTIAN, 30, born again, MNC, Australia. 8138900316

MUSLIM, COIMBATORE, 34/178cms, Athletic, BE MBA, working BLR, 35+ LPA, seeks Family Oriented upper middle class Tamil/Urdu/Malayalam speaking MBA/Dr/CA/Arch, Working beautiful bride < 31. WA: 9789490721.

CHRISTIAN CSI Tamil 43yrs/174Cm, BE. MBA, Divorcee No Issues MNC Abroad. seeks suitable Bride. 9094677765

PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN Male 53 Unmarried Teacher. Seeks Bride. Divorcees,Widowers without issues are also welcome. Apply: vinziisaac@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN NADAR, Doctor, Divorcee 37yrs/178cm, MBBS, Dip in Cardiology better earning lives in Nagercoil seeks qualified/ Divorced Bride. 9003983230

TAMIL MUSLIM 28 yr old ME graduate working in Chennai seeking bride of age 23–27 BE or any Master degree, working or willing to work. Ct 9361134612

RC CHRISTIAN, 42yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, works for mnc, Chennai. CT–9500188067

CHRISTIAN, 28, Born again, UK, 10 crores, MS. 8138900316

CHRISTIAN, 28, MS, UK, Fair. 8138901189

BRIDE WANTED Tamil Beri Chettiar 32,BE, MS working Infosys seeks girl from Chettiar Chennai Ct 9566163405

TAMIL JAIN 32/ 185 Pooradam/ B.E/ Business, settled in Chennai seeks suitable Bride from same community or Pure Veg Family. Ct:97890 90793

TAMIL

MUDALIAR, BE, MTECH 28/168cm working in software - Chennai good looking seeks working bride. Ct: 9444701999 / 9841816265

HINDU, 37, caste no bar, NRI, 30 crores, 8138900470.

HINDU, divorced, USA, CPA 30 crores, 9072777811

HINDU NAIDU, 2nd Marriage, Age: 45, BBA, IT, 8 Lacs P.A, seeks suitable Bride, Divorcee or Widow without Children. Caste No Bar. 9840976778

HINDU, 28, caste no bar, fair & handsome, UK, VVIP. 8138900412

SEEKING BRIDE for our son 35y/ 173cm, MTech(IIT), MS(US), working in US. Hindu Tamil, Girl in India only. Parents Thevar and Iyengar, Caste No Bar. 9600865587, sivampankajam@gmail.com

MUDALIAR 32/168 Kettai BE Mech, MBA, Coimbatore CT: 95977-72439, 84892-72439.

DKV 2nd Marriage 53 / 3.5 LPM Sr. GM B'lore Seeks Issueless Girl CNB 9442607143.

BRIDE WANTED: For 33–yr–old groom, Piramalai Kallar, employed at Nokia, Bangalore, Income Rs.1.20 Lakhs pm., well–settled family, alliance from any Mukkulathor is welcome. Earlier marriage legally declared null & void. Contact with details: +91 98845 10516.

TAMIL YADAVA Boy, MBA, 37, Ayilyam,,TCS, Chennai seeks yadava bride within TN., Sozhia Vellalar, Mudaliyar bride considerable., Contact through Tamil. 9965673354, 7373386474.

AGE 56, Good body structure, Well settled Looking for a very beautiful & comfortable bride over 50 Years old. Email : dharanr2006@gmail.com

PILLAI 38 Central Govt Officer Swati/Thula looking Bride CNB 9597331609

THULUVA VELALAR, Dec1981, BE, Software Professional seeks a suitable match. 9442112385 /7353847074 (WApp)

RICH MUDALIYAR, 29yrs, BE, MBA, Elite business family, Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9176491777

THULUVA VELLALAR - Karthik - Ayilyam - Kadagam - May 1990 - 180 cm; B.Tech, ECE - Business - Puducherry - Seeking a Bride, +91 97892 10174, +91 95668 38577

HINDU 64 yrs well Settled separated from Family looking for a widow 50 yrs for remarriage. WA 8220822951.

LOOKING FOR a Bride for our Son, 39/180cm, M.Tech,MS Engineer Sweden.Hindu Mudaliar, Uthiradam. 9884187197

MUDALIAR 28/175 MBBS,MD, 2400000. PA, Industrialist Son, Elite Family, 70.Cr CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

RETIRED HIGH Placed Official, divorcee, male, SC AD, 62, looking for suitable alliance from divorced /widows without Children and encumbrances, preferably Graduates and interested in Sports and Games. Contact in confidence 86100 59503.

HINDU NADAR, 43yrs/180cm, Analyst Programmer in Australia, Divorcee (no Issues) seeks good looking well qualified professional. CNB. Ct: 9902047595

TAMIL

Hindu Nadar 40 yr/180 cm PSU Bank Manager, CBE Divorcee seeks life partner any BC Caste Ct: 9942280831

VANNIYAKULAKSHATRIAR GROOM 43yrs, Divorced shortlived no issue. B.E, M.B.A(UK). Working in IT Company Chennai. 16.2 laks/PA Contact: 9944928521, 9487935521.

HINDU, 39, any caste, 50 lakhs, widow. 8137003551

HINDU, 30, Nadar, 50 lakhs, MBA. 8138901337

Tamil Hindu, 35 yrs, IIT M.Tech, Rs. 1 Cr package. Seeking Good Family Educated Bride. CNB (080-69129297)

BRIDE WANTED Hindu Nadar 27yrs BE, MS working in software 2lac/p/m Elite family Ct:9380791999/ 9841329471

THULUVA VELLALA MUDALIYAR, 29 years BE. MBA, Asst. Manager, Federal Bank, Raichur, Karnataka, Subsects No Bar. Seeks Employed (or) Unemployed bride CT: 98450 55046

WANTED BRIDE, Age Limit 25–35, Caste No Bar, No Brokers. Contact: 9282231814

HINDU NADAR Age 37, Video Editor Pvt Channel Chennai,Salary 40k Rental income 26k Own Hosue in Chennai,Seeks Bride. 9894220700 / 8190900067

HINDU, 32/180, Ph.D, Well Settled, Engineer, Upper Middle class. Working in Canada. Seeks good looking bride. Caste no bar. Ct: 9444087877

Brahmin, Vathimal, Bharadwajam, 28/174, BE, MBA, Core, Chennai 8.5 LPA seeking Grad. Iyer Girl. Contact : 9445005078

Seeking BRIDE for Bridegroom
Hindu, Kulalar/Udayaar, 44 yrs, 170 cms, M.Tech, IT professional, Caste open for discussion. First Marriage Only
CT: 93842 76066

BRIDE WANTED

Vadakalai Iyengar - Bharadwaja - Swathi - Thula; Sep' 1995 – Normal Complexion - 172 cm; PG in AI&ML from BITS & BE (ECE) – Working as Lead Data Analyst in MNC, Bangalore; Seeking a Bride who is working in Bangalore or willing to relocate.
+91-94814-06236
+91-97316-33361
krishrang1962@gmail.com

Parents looking for Mudhaliar/ allied forward caste Hindu, educated cultured, Higher middle/ higher class bride for our only son born 3/4/1995. Fair good looking, 165cm height, M.Tech, PhD Genetics, Research scientist in UK. Star Bharani, Mesham rasi, Elite Mudhaliar community. Parents living in Chennai. Interested send horoscope to Email: apsaram1953@gmail.com Whatsapp: 89390 61404.

HINDU NADAR Groom 36/5'11"/lean, Superspecialist Doctor, Chennai, well settled, divorced, no child. Seeks preferably unmarried, well educated bride under 34yrs. Profession No Bar. Contact: 9500127162.

TAMIL

Brahmin 47 seeks Girl 35 to 45, Private, own House, Fair, Clean habit any caste, No mother, Only Son. Ct: 97914 53205, 99629 17322, 80723 60203.

Hindu Kuttam Nadar 37yrs/162cm, Poosam / Kadakham, Dip. in Mechanical Engr, Warehouse Manager in AHUJA Mecotronics TN, Sal. 6-7 LPA, seeks Educated, Good Looking Bride from same caste. Ct: 99406 60112.

Viswakarma Boy, 26 Yrs/169 cm, BTec, MBA, 24 LPA, Contact: 9047755228

Tamil Yadava, 35 yrs Groom, Master's (UK), Multiple Businesses, Rs. 700 Cr net worth. CNB. (080-69129266)

TELUGU

BALIJA NAIDU Boy Handsome/30yrs M.S(Aus.) Settled in Chennai Elite Family Seeks good looking Bride only from Elite background Ct: 7299044330

NAIDU, CNB, 31yrs, MBBS, MS, Very Elite business family in Chennai, Seeks Suitable Bride Ct: 6385293227

NAIDU, 29YRS, Divorce, M.Tech, Running Own Business family in Chennai, Seeks Suitable Bride Ct:6385293227

NAIDU 30/185 H–some, BE, MBA, Multi Business,7000000.PA, Elite Family, 100.Cr CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

HINDU, TELUGU, 39yrs MBA Chennai, 3 Lac P.M. NBFC Bangalore. Caste No Bar. Well educated & Fair Girl. Whatsapp. 91235 09810

Vijay Bhaskar Inguva, Brahmin VV, Sounakasa, 45/178 cm, unmarried, Sravanam, H1B, Hyderabad,seeking any Brahmin Girl, subcaste no bar. Phone: 9246543525

Kamma/ Converted Christian 49y/170 Rich/ Widower/ Software Architect in USA (Citizen), CNB. Wup:7032123063

Telugu, 32 yrs, Naidu Groom, MBA, Rs. 500 Cr net worth. Seeking suitable match. Contact: (080-69129293)

URDU

SUNNI MUSLIM 38/178cm M.Tech (Automotive Consultant in MNC), Legally divorced seeks Educated, religious bride for second marriage. Divorcee or widow prefered without kids from Tamilnadu Urdu speaking only. Contact: 9840104813

URDU MUSLIM Groom 27/150 BE SWE Reputed Company, Banglore. Seeks Working Bride. 8540070259.

Muslim, 1993-born groom, MBBS / MS, seeking a suitable match. (080-69072050)

SMU 28/175cm BE MBA working in MNC Chennai family seeks Pious Muslimah professionally qualified bride from respectable family. 9884624899.

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US UK Canada All Caste Religion 1st Marriage Remarriage. Ct:8248757840

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THE HINDU
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‘China will have half of newly diagnosed Parkinson’s disease cases in next decade’

In 2030, it is estimated that 8.7 million individuals will be affected by Parkinson’s, of which 57% will be from China, 14% from Europe, 8% from India, 7% from the U.S., 4% from Brazil, and 10% others

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

(Front row from left): Andrew Ollett, Nikhil Agarwal, Sushant Sachdeva, Chief Guest Randy Schekman, Anjana Badrinarayanan, Sabyasachi Mukerjee, and Karthish Manthiram, along with Infosys trustees (Back row from left) Salil Parekh, S.D Shibulal, Nandan Nilekani, N.R. Narayana Murthy, K. Dinesh, Kris Gopalakrishnan, and T.V. Mohandas Pai, during the Infosys Award 2025 ceremony at Taj West End in Bengaluru on Saturday. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

Nobel Laureate Randy Schekman on Saturday said that China would have over half of newly diagnosed Parkinson’s disease cases in the next decade.

Speaking at the 2025 Infosys Prize ceremony, Dr. Schekman, who is a professor in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, University of California, Berkeley, said the burden of Parkinson disease and other neurodegenerative conditions is growing.

Like pandemic

“It (Parkinson’s) is a challenge around the world like the pandemic, it knows no boundaries. It is estimated that in the next decade China will have over half of new cases of Parkinson’s disease diagnosed. It is not because of better diagnosis, maybe because of environmental concerns,” Dr. Schekman said.

Estimation

He said that in 2005, there were 4.1 million individuals who had Parkinson’s of whom 48% were from China, 20% from Europe, 8% from India and the U.S., 4% from Brazil, and others made up for 12% of the cases. In 2030, it is estimated that 8.7 million individuals will be affected, of which 57% will be from China, 14% from Europe, 8% from India, 7% from the U.S., 4% from Brazil, and 10% others.

Dr. Schekman also spoke about his late wife Nancy Walls’ struggle with Parkinson’s disease and how it affected his family.

Role of ASAP

He also highlighted the work by Aligning Science Across Parkinson’s (ASAP) which aims to build out a research roadmap which identifies large scale, innovative solutions to address key knowledge gaps in the fundamental understanding of how Parkinson’s disease develops and progresses.

“We have five more years of this programme. We have breakthroughs that have identified targets that I am confident that the pharmaceutical industry will embrace in finding cures that are more effective, and when i walk away from this programme in five years, i will leave behind some confidence in breakthroughs that will make a difference in the lives of those affected with these diseases,” the Nobel Laureate said. Dr. Schekman also gave away the Infosys Prize 2025 to the winners on the occasion.

The prize is awarded in six categories and the winners in each category are Nikhil Agarwal (Economics), Sushant Sachdeva (Engineering and Computer Science), Andrew Ollett (Humanities and Social Sciences), Anjana Badrinarayanan (Life Sciences), Sabyasachi Mukherjee (Mathematical Sciences), and Karthish Manthiram (Physical Sciences).

The prize for each category comprises a gold medal, a citation, and a prize purse of $100,000 (or, its equivalent in rupees).

Tourism Dept. identifies 11 potential Blue Flag beaches in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

The Karnataka Tourism Department has identified 11 potential Blue Flag beaches in the State, Secretary of the Department K.V. Thrilok Chandra said on Saturday.

Addressing the Coastal Karnataka Tourism Conclave, Mr. Chandra said that the beaches identified as potential Blue Flag candidates are Someshwara, Ullal, and Sasihitlu in Dakshina Kannada; Asare, Kodi Kanyana, Padukere, Kodi Kundapur, and Shiroor in Udupi; and Bailur, Apsarakonda, and Ravidranath Tagore beach in Uttara Kannada.

He noted that developing these as Blue Flag beaches would cost around ₹142.06 crore.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and other Ministers, launching the logo of the International Kite Festival, during the Coastal Karnataka Tourism Conclave, in Mangaluru on Saturday. H.S. MANJUNATH

Footfall goes up

The development will involve educational programmes, installing information signages, introducing adventure and water sports, organising beach festivals and events, beach cleaning, garbage collection and disposal, water quality tests, and maintaining public amenities, he said. The Secretary said the domestic tourist footfall in coastal Karnataka went up from 28 crores in 2023 to 30 crores in 2024, while the foreign tourist footfall went up from 4.09 lakh to 4.85 lakh during the same period.

“The coastal Karnataka is attracting a large number of tourists but is still considered as under-developed. The region holds immense potential for development of tourism and hospitality experiences,” he said, adding that the coastal Karnataka accounts for about 21% to 38% of the total tourist visits to Karnataka. The Secretary said that five national waterways have been identified for developing river cruise tourism in Karnataka, namely, Kali river, covering 53 km; Sharavati river, covering 29 km; Gurupura river, covering 10 km, Netravathi river, 30 km, and Kabini river, covering 23 km.

Beach shack policy

Mr. Chandra said that the Draft Karnataka Beach Shack Policy aims to regulate and promote eco-friendly, sustainable and responsible tourism on the State’s coastline while ensuring local community participation, environment conservation and quality visitor experiences.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who inaugurated the event, said that the State government would unveil a separate tourism policy for the coastal Karnataka after consulting with stakeholders.

The draft policy would be tabled before the Cabinet for its approval before announcing the policy, he said.

Participating in the event, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that maintaining proper law and order mattered most for tourism to thrive. “Peace prevails in the coastal belt now. Let it continue forever.”

Asking people not to take law into their hands, the Chief Minister said no one should divide the society on the basis of caste and religion. The logo of the International Kite Festival, which will held in Mangaluru on January 17 and January 18, was released on the occasion.

Contract killing angle emerges in murder case

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The sensational case in which a 45-year-old software engineer allegedly shot his wife dead in the middle of the road minutes before walking into the station to surrender on December 23 has taken a dramatic turn, with the police taking another habitual offender from Tamil Nadu on a body warrant in connection with the crime.

The Magadi Road police have arrested Salem native Moulesh, the habitual offender in a theft case. He was remanded in custody. The police are questioning him along with the prime accused Balamurugan. The incident occurred on the evening of December 23 at Industrial town in Magadi Road police station limits, where Balamurugan allegedly shot dead his estranged wife Bhuvaneshwari, 39, a bank employee, with a pistol in public.

Startling revelation

During police interrogation, a startling revelation emerged. Investigators found that prior to the murder, Balamurugan had travelled to Salem, where he met Moulesh at a hotel owned by his relatives. He reportedly offered a contract with ₹1.5 lakh and a pistol to carry out the hit job. Balamuguran also allegedly discussed plans to carry out the murder at a location without CCTV coverage.

It was alleged that Balamurugan asked him to execute the murder within two to three months.

Moulesh reportedly told Balamurugan that he needed time to survey the location and conduct reconnaissance. Following this, Moulesh allegedly came to Bengaluru and conducted a recce of Bhuvaneshwari’s workplace and the routes she frequently used. However, he returned to his hometown with the pistol over a dispute regarding the contract money. Enraged, Balamurugan allegedly decided to carry out the murder himself. As per his plan, he allegedly shot dead his wife with a second pistol he had and later surrendered before the police.

Conspiracy angle

The police have also summoned and questioned several persons linked to Balamurugan as part of the ongoing investigation. A further probe is under way to establish the full conspiracy angle and the role of others involved.

Road-cutting, encroachment issues raised at meeting

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Road-cutting by telecommunication companies, garbage collection, and footpath encroachments were among the issues raised by the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) at a public meeting held in Malleswaram with the West Corporation officials on Saturday.

During the meeting, the associations welcomed the corporation’s paid parking plan. “Despite earlier doubts about the policy being anti-people, the kind of response received from resident welfare groups has given me the courage to move forward with the plan,” said Rajendra K.V., Commissioner of the West Corporation.

The public also raised concerns over road-cutting by the telecommunication companies, calling it a persistent problem.

Self-styled ‘godman’ arrested for possession of endangered wildlife and other materials

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a joint operation, a city-based NGO and officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on Friday arrested a 45-year-old self-styled godman for allegedly selling monitor lizard genitals, claiming to resolve the problems of their clients through magical powers to control their partner.

The accused has been identified as Dakshina Murthy. Investigators said he was also involved in the illegal sale of soft coral and other wildlife articles, operating his business through social media platforms.

NGO approched DRI

Members of CARE, an NGO involved in animal rescue and rehabilitation, approached the DRI officials after receiving specific information that the accused had been running an online racket for several years, selling monitor lizard genitals at ₹10,000 a piece. The accused also allegedly sold soft coral to clients, claiming it could bring good fortune and luck, sources said. As part of the operation, one of the

The accused has been booked under various sections of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and has been taken into custody for further investigation

NGO members posed as a prospective client online and later visited the accused house in Nagashettyhalli, following which the information was passed on to the officials.

Materials recovered

During the raid, the officials recovered 206 monitor lizard genitals, 1.5 kg of soft coral, a tiger skin, and other materials allegedly used to perform rituals, which were also uploaded as videos on his social media accounts. The seized articles have been handed over to the Forest Department officials for further analysis.

The sources said the accused had around 25,000 followers across the country, with many clients approaching him for issues related to love failure and personal problems. The investigators revealed that the accused sourced the wildlife articles through contacts in Tamil Nadu and other regions.

Booked

The accused has been booked under various sections of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and has been taken into custody for further investigation.

In November last year, the Jnana Bharathi police arrested a quack and his associate for allegedly cheated a city-based software engineer of ₹48 lakh by promising a cure for his sexual health issues, and later threatening him when he refused to pay more.

Souharda Bharata released

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Souharda Bharata, authored by writer and filmmaker Baraguru Ramachandrappa, was released simultaneously at 23 locations across the State on Saturday. In Bengaluru, the book was released in an event jointly organised by Jana Prakashana, Souharda Karnataka, and the Prasaranga of Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University. Ramesh B., Vice-Chancellor of the university, observed that the growing conflicts based on caste, religion, and language have created an alarming atmosphere of social fragmentation, and that the values of harmony and equality advocated by Prof. Ramachandrappa are extremely relevant in the present times.

Prof. Ramachandrappa emphasised the urgent need to safeguard social well-being in the present complex situation, where the conflict between humanism and fundamentalism has reached a critical stage.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations
Azad Bhavan, I.P. Estate, New Delhi 110002

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Families facing social boycott in Shivamogga hope for redress in the new law

Sathish G.T.
ULAVI (SHIVAMOGGA DIST.)

"I am in agony for years. Recently my younger brother died. I could not go to pay my last respects. When I die, none of them can come either," said 75-year-old Ganapathiyappa, a resident of Duguru in Sorab taluk. He was sharing the experiences he had suffered following the social boycott imposed on his family.

"Of course, the boycott does not restrict sunlight or rain, but I have not been able to speak to my close relatives and friends for years," he says, teary-eyed.

Many residents in several villages in Sorab taluk have been victims of social boycott imposed by the unofficial village committee consisting of powerful people. In this pocket, it is largely those belonging to the Deevaru (Idiga) caste, in most cases those imposing and suffering boycott being from the same community. Besides, families belonging to the Scheduled Caste and other backward classes are also suffering owing to this practice.

The committee, according to the affected people, resolves to enforce a social boycott for various reasons. "The families that go against the will of the committee are likely to face the boycott. Similarly, those who support such people also face the same order," said Manjappa Naik, a resident of Barige, whose family is also facing boycott.

Several families in Sorab taluk that are facing social boycott recently met in Ulavi in Sorab taluk. Members of around 20 families staged a protest in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Shivamogga, appealing to the administration to end their trauma. SATHISH G.T.

Cases galore

Valliyamma's family, a Scheduled Caste family at Ulavi-Pathresalu village, was boycotted because she went to court to claim a piece of land granted to her long ago. Praveen Kumar's family in the same village was boycotted because he approached the police following a clash with neighbours. His neighbour Prema Kumari's family was also boycotted because it continued to communicate with Praveen's family.

Parashuram, a carpenter at Gudavi village, was subjected to boycott because he filed a police complaint after he and his family members were allegedly harassed by a few people in the village. Ganeshappa of B. Holekatte village was boycotted as he moved court to claim the land that he had been cultivating, against the wishes of the village committee.

Complaints unheard

These villagers have complained to the officers and elected representatives, including Minister for School Education Madhu Bangarappa, who represents Sorab in the Assembly. Members of around 20 families staged a protest in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Shivamogga, appealing to the administration to end their trauma.

The officers tend to act when the family affected belongs to the Scheduled Caste, as the offence is treated as a caste atrocity. However, in the case of others, there has been hardly any action. "When officers hold meetings in the village, a majority of the people speak in favour of the village committees, ignoring the plight of boycotted minorities," said Mr. Ganapathiyappa.

The families boycotted are not allowed to do business in the village. Shopkeepers do not entertain them. Barbers deny them services. "My son could not attend the Anganwadi centre in the village. Now I have admitted him to a school at Sorab," said Ganeshappa of B. Holekatte. Chandrappa of Barige said his daughter rides her bicycle to school alone, maintaining a distance from her classmates who travel together.

"In many cases, daughters are not allowed to see their parents on their deathbeds. Whoever violates the diktat is penalised. Interestingly, those who notice the violation and inform the committees are rewarded," said Mr. Manjappa Naik.

However, Mr. Madhu Bangarappa has denied allegations of social boycott in his constituency. "I know a few people staged protests alleging it. If there are any such cases, the law should take its course. I have instructed the Deputy Commissioner to suitable action," he said.

Hope in law

The families are hopeful that the Karnataka Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2025, that has been passed by both the Houses of Karnataka Legislature in the Belagavi session in December, 2025, will bring relief to them soon. The Bill got the assent of the Governor earlier this week.

"Our children have been denied social life. They cannot play with our neighbours and relatives. We are praying for a peaceful co-existence," said Ms. Valliyamma.

BJP and JD(S) accuse Congress of misleading people on VB-G RAM G

Alliance partners to take the issue to the village level to counter the 'misinformation' being spread by the ruling party

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bharatiya Janata Party and its ally Janata Dal (Secular) on Saturday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of "spreading misinformation" on the Union government's VB-G RAM G scheme, while welcoming Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's decision to convene a special session of the Legislature to discuss the issue.

At a joint press conference addressed by Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy, BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra and other senior party leaders, the Opposition alliance said the scheme was a major rural employment and livelihood programme conceptualised under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and aimed at strengthening gram panchayats and social audits.

Mr. Vijayendra said the Congress was attempting to "mislead" people by claiming that the scheme would dilute the MGNREGA.

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy, BJP Karnataka State president B.Y. Vijayendra, Leader of the Opposition of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R .Ashok at a press conference in Bengaluru on Saturday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

"The Centre has increased the number of workdays from 100 to 125 and ensured funds reach beneficiaries directly. Gram panchayat decisions will continue as before and powers are not being taken away. The Congress never thought of schemes but only scams during its years in power. It is now campaigning against the scheme even before its roll out," he said, asserting that the BJP-JD(S) would take the issue to the village level to counter the "misinformation".

Open debate

Mr. Kumaraswamy challenged Congress leaders to an open debate on the scheme. He said the Congress, which ruled the country for decades, did not name major schemes after Mahatma Gandhi and had "failed to address corruption and fake bills under MGNREGA". "MGNREGA has not been stopped. Irregularities have been corrected. The Congress is now opposing transparency and social audits," he said.

According to him, the scheme follows a 60:40 funding pattern, with the Centre bearing the larger share. He said the scheme provides for project design at the gram panchayat level, priority setting by gram sabhas and mandatory social audits. "This level of accountability was missing earlier," he said, claiming that the Centre was not weakening panchayat powers or State rights.

Fake job cards

The Opposition alliance alleged that the State government had previously failed to prevent fake job cards and inflated bills, and cited past incidents where wage payments were delayed.

Both leaders welcomed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's decision to convene a two-day special session to discuss the scheme. "Let us debate what the Congress achieved through MGNREGA and what the Centre has done in the last 10 years," Mr. Vijayendra said, adding that the State government had not yet notified its promised State Education Policy after deciding not to implement the National Education Policy.

The alliance also alleged that the Congress was unable to accept the Prime Minister's popularity and was attempting to create discontent. It said the Opposition would not allow "false narratives" to go unchallenged.

Cong. to launch 'save MGNREGA' campaign on January 26

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar said here on Saturday that the Congress will launch "save Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005" campaign in the State on January 26 by holding 'padayatras' in each Assembly constituency.

Speaking to presspersons at the Mangaluru International Airport, he said that 'padayatras' will cover five to 10 k.m. distance in each Assembly segment.

The Union government has replaced the MGNREGA with Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act, 2025.

He said the MGNREGA had guaranteed annual works to the tune of ₹6,000 crore in the State as ₹1 crore per panchayat. Now the Union government has diluted MGNREGA, he alleged.

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar speaking to presspersons at the Mangaluru International Airport on Saturday.

The 'padayatras' will cover 5 to 10 km distance in each Assembly segment

Awareness

"We will create awareness on how the new legislation of the Centre will impact people in rural areas. We are also planning a two-day Legislature session to discuss VB-G RAM G. The padayatras will include panchayat members, labourers who benefited from the MGNREGA, etc. The fight against VB-G RAM G will continue till MGNREGA is reinstated," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

Pinarayi Vijayan defends Malayalam Language Bill

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday defended the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, in strong terms saying that apprehensions with respect to the Bill "do not reflect the facts or the inclusive spirit of the legislation passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Vijayan's post comes on the heels of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urging him to withdraw the Bill to protect the interests of the Kannada-speaking linguistic minorities in Kerala.

"Kerala's progress has always been rooted in comprehensive development anchored in equality and brotherhood. The government remains steadfast in upholding the constitutional values of secularism and pluralism. The Bill contains a clear and unambiguous non-obstante clause (Clause 7) to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities, particularly the Kannada and Tamil speaking communities," he said in an X post.

The Kerala Chief Minister says apprehensions on the Bill do not reflect facts.

'Avoids imposition'

Mr. Vijayan added that the Bill has provisions to avoid imposition of any language and to protect linguistic freedom. "In notified areas, Tamil and Kannada speakers may continue to use their mother tongues for official correspondence with the Secretariat, Heads of Departments, and local offices, with replies issued in the same languages," he said.

Along with his X post, he also shared a screenshot of Clause 7 of the Bill which deals with 'Special provisions regarding other State-linguistic minorities' and protects their language rights.

Kerala's language policy, he said, is "fully aligned" with the Official Languages Act, 1963, and Articles 346 and 347 of the Constitution of India. "India's diversity is to be celebrated, not forced into a single mould," he added.

Students whose mother tongue is not Malayalam are free to choose languages available in schools in accordance with the National Education Curriculum. Students from other States or foreign countries are not compelled to appear for Malayalam examinations at the IX, X, or Higher Secondary levels, he said.

Meanwhile, in Bengaluru, a delegation led by Karnataka Border Development Authority chairperson, members and Kannada activists from Kasaragod met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. They urged him to meet the President and ensure that the Bill does not get assent.

MLCs request CM to pressure Centre to release funds to GPs

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Eleven Congress MLCs have written to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who also holds the Finance portfolio, urging him to press the Centre for the release of pending dues amounting to ₹2,100 crore under the 15th Finance Commission for 5,950 gram panchayats in Karnataka.

The legislators – Dinesh Gooli Gowda, Saleem Ahmed, Manjunath Bhandari, S. Ravi, Anil Kumar, Channaraj Hattiholi, D. Thimmaiah, Sharanagouda Bayyapura, Bheemarao Patil, Sunil Gowda Patil and Rajendra Rajanna – have requested the Chief Minister to take immediate steps to ensure the early release of funds to the gram panchayats. They pointed out that the State has not received the first instalment of ₹1,092 crore.

In their letter, the MLCs said the delay in releasing funds under the 15th Finance Commission was weakening the very idea of "gram swarajya" and hindering development activities in rural areas. While States such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have already received their allocations, Karnataka is still waiting, they noted.

The MLCs said the delay in releasing funds was weakening the very idea of 'gram swarajya'

With the term of elected gram panchayat representatives ending in February 2026, the legislators expressed concern that there is barely a month and a half left to utilise the funds. Karnataka has nearly 92,000 gram panchayat members, and if the grants are not released soon, many essential works will remain incomplete, they warned.

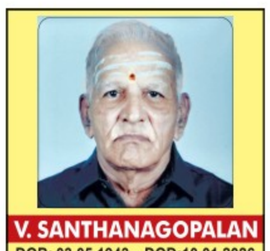
OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY
OUR BEACON OF LIGHT

PROF. W. P. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN
1926 - 2020

DEATH


V. SANTHANAGOPALAN
DOB: 03.05.1943 ~ DOD:10.01.2026
Retd. AEE Agri Engg Dept, Nandanam
Attained Shivalokapraapthi, joining his late wife D.Savithri.
Deeply mourned by
Son, daughter, son in law, daughter in law, grandchildren and our extended family.
10th day ceremony on 19.01.26
Ct: 98410 35879

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Date of Birth: 31-03-1938
Date of Death: 11-01-2025
Our beloved memory of
Dr.Prof. K.R. Vittal Doss M.A.,Ph.D.
(Retd.) Professor & Spiritual Author
Recognised & Awarded for his Contribution towards Literature by Govt. of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh & TamilNadu
Wife: (Late) K.V. Meera
Sons & Daughters in Law
K.V. Omprakash - Akila
K.V. Sridhar - Sri Priya
Grand Daughter: Shweta - T.J.Dhiraj Babu
Grand Son: K.S. Sagar
And Family Members & Relatives
Vittal Nivas:148, K.K.Nagar, A.R.Hospital Road, Opp. to PSR Silks
Madurai -20 Cell: 98455 44653, 96635 46995

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When wizards and Hobbits unearth tax frauds in Kerala

Tiki Rajwi
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

What do Middle-earth, the fictional setting of J.R.R. Tolkien's popular fantasies, and the Harry Potter series have to do with tax raids in Kerala? When it comes to picking names for 'operations' launched against tax evaders, Tolkien's and J.K. Rowling's works are proving to be a treasure trove for the State Goods and Services Tax department.

For instance, raids conducted in catering service units across the State on January 6 sported the name 'Operation Crookshanks.' In the Harry Potter adventures, Crookshanks is Hermione Granger's ginger cat, which, as the story goes, possesses an uncanny ability to spot untrustworthy characters. The name, as it turned out, was spot on. The tax raids unearthed turnover suppression to the tune of ₹80.14 crore. Last October, the department conducted 'Operation Honeydukes' in restaurants. 'Honeydukes' is the sweet shop in Hogsmeade village, a favourite hang-out of the students of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Or take 'Operation Prancing Pony,' which in September 2025 targeted bar hotels suspected of turnover suppression and tax evasion. At first glance, the name seems randomly picked. But there's a connection. In Tolkien's works, Prancing Pony is the local inn in the village of Bree where the locals tended to gather. In The Lord of the Rings, it is described as a "pleasant house to familiar eyes."

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R KUMAR

In August 2025, there was 'Operation Arkenstone.' Those raids unearthed turnover suppression worth more than ₹100 crore in jewelleries in Thrissur district. In Tolkien's 'The Hobbit,' Arkenstone is the "great white gem," the "fairest of all," considered the "heart of the Mountain."

Named in-house

The names are chosen in-house by the department, according to State GST officials. "It's fun. It provides a space for being creative," said Sreelakshmi R., Additional Commissioner, State GST department, on the choice of names.

But not all of the State GST department's extraordinary choices are from Tolkien or Rowling. For instance, a massive operation last May which broke the back of a racket engaged in recycling and selling industrial waste oil as 'biodiesel' was cryptically named 'Fuego Marino.' Equally enigmatic was 'Operation Rare Raccoon' which unearthed tax evasions in ready-mix concrete units in February 2025.

Kerala CPI(M) veteran leader says he will join BJP soon

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

S. Rajendran, three-time MLA of Kerala's ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], has said that he will join the BJP "soon". The veteran leader has already held discussions with BJP State president Rajeev Chandrasekhar. "I will join BJP soon. The party leadership will finalise the next steps," said Mr. Rajendran.

The former Devikulam MLA said his move was not motivated by personal or electoral gains. "I decided to join the BJP to address critical issues in Idukki district," he said.

'India should design, manufacture 70% of products made here'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Given its GDP growth, India should design and manufacture at least 70% of products made here over the next 10 years, according to experts at a webinar on Building Research and Innovation Ecosystem organised by SASTRA deemed-to-be-University, Thanjavur in collaboration with *The Hindu Education Plus*, as part of the Career X for Gen Z series on Saturday.

"We should not depend on imported products and technologies. We have 1,50,000 scientists and an excellent pool of young talent who should be nurtured to focus on large Indian problems and solve them in a unique manner," said IIT Madras professor Ashok Jhunjhunwala, who chairs the Immersive Technology and Entrepreneurship Labs at the institute.

For India to become technologically self-reliant, schools and colleges need to foster research culture. Free research is driven by curiosity, experts on the panel reiterated.

Shivkumar Kalyanaraman, chief executive officer of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, highlighted how government funding and other assistance is driving transformation in research and innovation.

What students learn should be of relevance; a good idea has to go all the way to become a product and a commercial success, said IIT Ropar director Rajeev Ahuja.

"Students have to be encouraged to have their own ideas and find their own solutions...," Mr. Ahuja added.

IIT Goa director Dhirendra S. Katti said: "IITs are diversifying now and running integrated programmes to enable students into immersive learning and critical thinking. But to become high quality researchers, one has to be resilient and passionate."

K. Uma Maheshwari, the dean of the School of Arts, Sciences, Humanities and Education at SASTRA University, said that research to product is a long pathway and students should not be bogged down by failures.

"Rejection of proposals and challenges birth the best ideas," Ms. Maheshwari said.

This webinar can be viewed at *https://newsth.live/THSABRY*

Sabarimala chief priest hospitalised

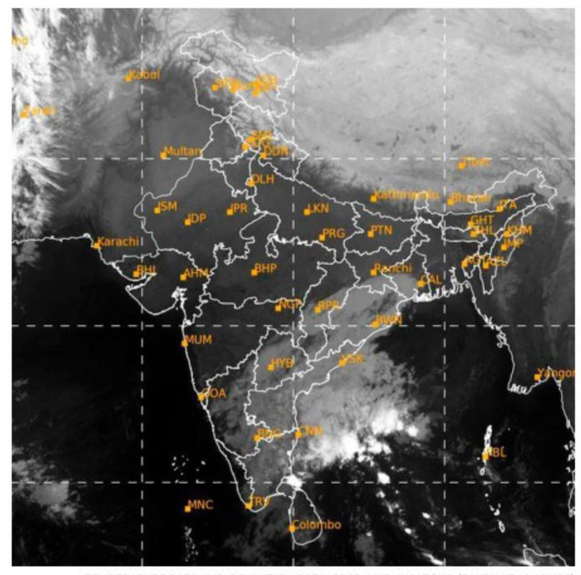
The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Prisons and Correctional Department rushed Sabarimala senior Tantri (chief priest) Kandararu Rajeevaru to the General Hospital, Thiruvananthapuram, on Saturday after he showed signs of physical distress at the Special District Sub Jail, where he is currently under judicial remand following his arrest on Friday in connection with the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple gold theft case.

According to the Special Sub Jail officials, Mr. Rajeevaru showed signs of physical fatigue and sleeplessness in the morning.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Cold wave conditions likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi and Odisha. Dense fog likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Sikkim and West Bengal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	26.2	14.0	Kozhikode	—	33.5	22.5
Ahmedabad	—	27.0	12.1	Kurnool	—	30.4	17.8
Aizawl	—	27.4	10.2	Lucknow	—	22.8	6.6
Allahabad	—	23.2	6.4	Madurai	—	32.4	23.5
Bengaluru	—	23.7	17.2	Mangaluru	—	33.5	21.0
Bhopal	—	26.4	7.2	Mumbai	—	31.4	16.2
Bhubaneswar	—	27.5	9.2	Mysuru	—	27.0	16.2
Chandigarh	—	18.0	4.0	New Delhi	—	20.2	4.2
Chennai	—	28.1	21.9	Patna	—	17.6	8.5
Coimbatore	—	31.1	21.2	Port Blair	—	29.8	25.7
Dehradun	—	23.0	6.2	Puducherry	3	26.3	21.9
Gangtok	—	15.3	5.3	Pune	—	29.8	14.4
Goa	—	33.3	19.6	Raipur	—	25.8	11.9
Guwahati	—	26.0	12.4	Ranchi	—	21.7	6.0
Hubballi	—	29.0	17.0	Shillong	—	18.0	8.0
Hyderabad	—	26.4	15.1	Shimla	—	18.0	5.0
Imphal	—	23.8	7.7	Srinagar	—	10.9	-5.7
Jaipur	—	21.9	7.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.1	22.1
Kochi	—	31.2	23.0	Tiruchi	0.2	25.7	20.0
Kohima	—	16.4	5.0	Vijayawada	—	27.5	20.0
Kolkata	—	23.3	11.3	Visakhapatnam	—	27.8	19.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.41	..48	.57	...164	...148	
Bengaluru	...5	..21	.38	...155	...231	
Chennai	...8	4	.54	77	82	
Delhi	.12	165	107	...356	...253	
Hyderabad	.10	..15	.81	87	...112	
Kolkata	...7	..88	.63	...235	...134	
Lucknow	...7	..47	.87	...199	...321	
Mumbai	.34	103	.28	...122	...129	
Pune	..—	..72	.47	...220	...201	
Visakhapatnam	.17	..64	.28	64	...101	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 351 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

Air Quality Code: Poor, Moderate, Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

From Page One

Iran defies U.S. warning, clamps down on protest

State TV repeatedly played a driving, martial orchestral arrangement from the "Epic of Khorramshahr" by Iranian composer Majid Entezami, while showing pro-government demonstrations. The song, aired repeatedly during the 12-day war launched by Israel, honours Iran's 1982 liberation of the city of Khorramshahr during the Iran-Iraq war. It has been used in videos of protesting women cutting away their hair to protest the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini as well.

"Field reports indicate that peace prevailed in most cities of the country at night," a State TV anchor reported. "After a number of armed terrorists attacked public places and set fire to people's private property last night, there was no news of any gathering or chaos in Tehran and most provinces last night."

That was directly contradicted by an online verified video that showed demonstrations in northern Tehran's Saadat Abad area, with what appeared to be thousands on the street. "Death to Khamenei!" a man chanted.

The semi-official Fars news agency, believed to be close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and one of the few media outlets able to publish to the outside world, released surveillance camera footage of what it said came from demonstrations in Isfahan. In it, a protester appeared to fire a long gun, while others set fires and threw gasoline bombs at what appeared to be a government compound.

The Young Journalists' Club, associated with State TV, reported that protesters killed three members of the Guard's all-volunteer Basij force in the city of Gachsaran. It also reported a security official was stabbed to death in Hamadan province, a police officer killed in the port city of Bandar Abbas and another in Gilan, as well as one person slain in Mashhad.

West Bengal Police step up probe into ED raids

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had visited both locations during the raids and, according to an ED statement, she and her aides had "forcibly removed physical documents and electronic evidences".

On Friday, Ms. Banerjee had justified her decision to intervene in the raids, saying that attempts were being made to steal her party's internal strategy during the ED action.

'Unsettling precedent'

The political consultancy firm at the centre of the controversy said the raids set an "unsettling precedent".

"It was a difficult and unfortunate day for a professional organisation like I-PAC. We believe this raises serious concerns and sets an unsettling precedent," I-PAC said in a statement. The Trinamool Congress had consulted with the firm over the past few years and I-PAC had helped the party shape its electoral and political strategy in the 2021 Assembly election and subsequent elections in West Bengal.

The ED said that the raid was connected to a probe into a coal smuggling syndicate and entities linked to hawala money, and was conducted strictly in accordance with established legal safeguards.

"It is clarified that the search is evidence-based and is not targeted at any political establishment. No party office has been searched. The search is not linked to any elections, and is part of regular crackdown on money laundering," the Central agency had claimed in a statement.

Students shocked over medical college's closure in J&K

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

There is a sense of shock and anxiety among Muslim students over the suspension of the MBBS course at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence at Katra in Jammu.

The students have started migrating from the campus.

"We are unable to believe that the college with such infrastructure stands closed. It offered up-to-the-mark facilities in every aspect. One of the best medical colleges in Jammu and Kashmir stands closed," said Aleena, one of the migrating students from the campus.

Hindu groups' protest

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College, one of the ambitious projects of J&K, registered its first batch on the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) ranking in October-November 2024.

Out of the 50 MBBS seats, 42 Muslim students, predominantly from Kashmir, qualified for the college.

The admission of higher number of Muslims students had sparked protests from Hindu groups, who formed a Sangharsh Samiti, and the BJP, which raised the issue with J&K Lieutenant Governor and chairman of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Manoj Sinha.

In a surprise visit in January this year, the National Medical Commission (NMC) on the basis of inadequacy in "faculty strength, clinical material and infrastructure" withdrew the approval granted just four months ago by it.

"It's a reckless decision," one college student said. The staff of the hospital has earned a reputation for guiding other medical colleges in the Jammu division. "Expert doctors at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital have been handholding many medical colleges in the Jammu division, including the newly created Government Medical College, Doda," a staff member said, on the condition of anonymity.

The NC student wing protests against the withdrawal of recognition for Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College, Jammu on Saturday. PTI

In an official letter forwarded to the NMC in 2024, the Board said it owned a multi-specialty hospital named Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital to run the medical college.

"The hospital, essential to run a medical college, with "state-of-art facility was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2016. This hospital has been operational since 2016 and has 417 beds to accommodate various patients admitted to the specialty and super-specialty departments.

"In addition to all the basic facilities, including medical, surgical, and allied specialties required for the establishment of a medical college, this hospital has more than ten super-specialties with renowned doctors providing patient care," the Board's letter to the NMC stated.

The Board shared an approved plan with the NMC "to accommodate all the specialties and super-specialties as per the patient load and the requirements of the Commission".

In its proposal, the Board aimed at 100 seats for MBBS, 60 for nursing college and a hostel for 500 students and doctors. The medical college is spread over 34 acres of land. At present, the hospital has 121 doctors on its rolls.

'Regional divide'

Meanwhile, the student wings of ruling National Conference (NC) held a street protest in Jammu and demanded restoration of the MBBS course at the college.

"A large section in Jammu opposes the closure and demands the continuation of the medical courses in the larger public interest," a NC leader said, during the protest.

Carrying placards, 'Justice for Jammu & Kashmir' and 'Education over politics', the NC members said there was an attempt to project the issue "as a regional divide".

"The future of students should not be jeopardised due to political pressure or divisive agendas," the protesting NC members said.

Man booked after security breach at Ram Mandir

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

A resident of Shopian district in Kashmir was taken into custody after he allegedly attempted to offer *namaz* inside the Ram Mandir complex in Ayodhya on Saturday.

Ahmed Sheikh, said to be mentally unsound, allegedly raised slogans when stopped by the authorities inside the complex.

The incident raised concern as the man entered the high-security temple premises.

It is said that he sat near the Sita Rasoi area and allegedly prepared to offer *namaz*.

Security agencies are interrogating the individual.

"He entered the temple complex through Gate D1, posing as a devotee. After entering the shrine complex, he sat near the Sita kitchen and began offering *namaz*. Visitors at the temple protested, prompting the security personnel to take immediate action...," said one local official.

His family claimed that he is mentally ill and has shared medical records from the psychiatry department of Srinagar Medical College to support their statement.

Manipur fuel outlets shut in protest against bomb attack

The Manipur Petroleum Dealers' Fraternity calls for the shutdown hours after the explosion in Bishnupur; in a letter to Governor, the body demands enhanced security amid 'severe threats'

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Petroleum dealers in Manipur's Imphal Valley and surrounding areas on Saturday began a shutdown of fuel stations for an indefinite period to protest frequent bomb attacks against them.

The Manipur Petroleum Dealers' Fraternity (MPDF) had called for the shutdown on Friday, hours after a bomb attack by unidentified miscreants near a fuel station in Bishnupur district on Thursday night. Nobody was injured in the attack.

In a letter addressed to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, the MPDF said that it had apprised him of the challenges its members were facing over miscreants targeting a fuel dealer on December 6, 2025.

Facing threats

"Though the authorities have taken up strict actions/steps towards the safety of the petrol pumps/dealers, yet we are facing severe threats," the letter read, asking the administration to enhance the security of petroleum dealers and fuel outlets to ensure that no similar incidents took place again.

In protest: A petrol pump stands closed in the Imphal Valley during a protest by fuel outlets on Saturday, following security threats and a recent bomb blast at a fuel station . ANI

The MPDF sought accountability from the administration if petroleum dealers are abducted or attacked. It also demanded compensation for damage to fuel outlet infrastructure and deaths caused to any dealer or staff in such attacks.

It was unclear if the bomb attacks were linked to any extortion attempt by armed groups, but the MPDF said its members would not be in a position to run their businesses if the situation did not improve.

"Everyone, including government employees, is encouraged to promptly report such incidents and cooperate fully with the authorities. The Integrated Anti-Extortion Cell will respond quickly by coordinating with relevant police stations and security forces to take effective measures," a statement issued by N. Ashok Kumar, Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Home), read.

The day before, the security forces arrested a member each of the outlawed Kangleipak Communist Party (Noyon) and the People's Revolution Party of Kangleipak (Pro) for allegedly being involved in extortion activities.

Poppy destroyed

Meanwhile, a team comprising security forces, Forest Department officials, and local authorities destroyed illegal poppy cultivation on some 40 acres in the Ngatan Hill Range of Senapati district on Friday.

Meghalaya CM appeals for peace amid unrest

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Saturday appealed for calm after the killing of a youth triggered unrest in the State's West Garo Hills district bordering Bangladesh.

The youth, identified as Dilseng M. Marak, died after unidentified assailants attacked members of an NGO called Achik, who had gone to the district's Rajabala village to "inspect" an allegedly illegal stone quarry on Friday afternoon. Another member of the NGO was seriously injured.

As much of the district and the Garo Hills region beyond observed a shutdown on Saturday to protest the "savage and cold-blooded" killing, the Chief Minister condemned the incident. He said that three people were arrested following police raids conducted at various locations.

"I would like to urge the citizens of Garo Hills to ensure that peace and communal harmony continue to prevail. There may be a lot of news circulating on social media. Please filter them carefully," the Chief Minister said.

Four injured in Bengal fireworks factory blast

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

A blast at a fireworks factory in West Bengal's Champahati in South 24 Parganas district severely injured four people on Saturday. One of them is in a critical condition.

Local people said they heard a loud sound three times from the factory area. The impact of the explosion blew away the asbestos roof of the structure. A nearby house was also damaged. A large tree in the area was burnt down to ashes.

Local police and firefighters doused the flames, rescued the people, and started investigating the cause of the fire. The blast site was sealed off to secure the location.

"The exact cause of the fire is not known. We are investigating," a firefighter present at the site said.

Nine-seater aircraft crash-lands on field in Odisha; all six aboard safe

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESHWAR/ NEW DELHI

A nine-seater passenger aircraft made a forced landing on a vacant agricultural field near Rourkela in Odisha on Saturday after the pilots detected a technical glitch. The airline confirmed that all six onboard, including the two pilots, are safe.

The flight from Bhubaneswar to Rourkela was operated by an Ahmedabad-based private regional airline, IndiaOne Air.

The airline had bagged several routes under the Central government's regional connectivity scheme to bring air connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

The aircraft involved in the accident was a Cessna Grand Caravan, which sustained extensive damage, particularly to its nose and main fuselage or aircraft body.

Close call: Firefighters dousing a fire after a small passenger aircraft crashed in Rourkela, Odisha on Saturday. PTI

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) will investigate the accident, the Ministry of Civil Aviation said in a press statement.

"The flight crew reported a technical issue after about 50 minutes of flight and prudently declared a "Mayday" call in accordance with established safety procedures. The pilots carried out a forced landing in an open area near Kansor, approximately 15-20 km short of Rourkela about 13:20 p.m.," the airline said in a press statement.

A forced landing is an emergency landing made by an aircraft when continuing the flight is no longer possible due to a serious problem, such as a mechanical failure, engine trouble, fuel issues, or other technical emergencies.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi wrote on X that he was personally monitoring the situation. "I have instructed that the best possible medical care be provided immediately to those injured in this incident," he wrote.

Locals rush to site

When the aircraft crash-landed, the locals immediately rushed to the spot and rescued the passengers, who were taken to Rajiv Gandhi Hospital, Rourkela, and another private hospital. "Passengers are safe. We have secured the accident site by cordoning it off for an investigation," said Sundargarh Collector Subhankar Mohapatra.

Rourkela Superintendent of Police Nitesh Wadhwani said officials are keeping a close watch on the health condition of all the occupants.

Minor girl raped in motor factory in West Bengal; 2 held

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Survivor's initial statements have been recorded, and medical tests conducted

The West Bengal Police have arrested one person and detained a minor boy for allegedly raping a 16-year-old girl inside an abandoned factory belonging to Hindustan Motors in the Uttarpara area of Hooghly district.

"Prime accused, Dipankar Adhikari, 29, was arrested on Friday. He was produced in court on Saturday. The gang rape complaint is still under investigation," the officer-in-charge of the Uttarpara Police Station told *The Hindu*.

The alleged incident took place on Thursday evening.

The police said that initial statements had been recorded, and medical tests of the survivor had been conducted. Cases have been filed under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Section 376D of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which involves accusations of gang rape.

The detained 17-year-old boy is reportedly a friend of the minor survivor. One more accused is on the run and the police are searching for him.

According to initial reports the girl had gone to her private tuition on Thursday evening, but skipped the class and went to the closed down factory with a friend.

Trinamool targeted

The State's Leader of the Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, targeted the ruling Trinamool Congress over the incident, saying that the arrested person was a close associate of local Trinamool leader Dilip Yadav.

"From the streets to educational institutions, girls are not safe anywhere at the hands of these 'reckless' assets of the Trinamool... To escape this hellish situation in West Bengal and to ensure the safety of mothers and sisters, it is necessary to overthrow this government immediately," he said.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) criticised the government over the incident saying that rape incidents had become an "epidemic" under the current regime. "They [criminals] have a sense of impunity. Rapes have become so rampant," CPI (M) State secretary Mohammad Salim said.

While a section of local Trinamool leaders condemned Mr. Dipankar Adhikari's involvement in the case, another section of the party denied any ties with the accused.

Suvendu alleges attack by Trinamool; stages sit-in at police station

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, alleged that his car was attacked by Trinamool Congress workers on Saturday night when he was returning from a public event in Purulia.

The BJP leader staged a sit-in inside a police station, and sought the arrest of the Trinamool members. Sitting on a dharna at the Chandrokona Police Station in Pashchim Medinipur district, he said he would not move from the station till the authorities took action.

"Tonight, around 8.20 p.m., while I was returning from Purulia, at Chandrakona Road in Paschim Medinipur district, I was viciously attacked by TMC goons. These cowards, emboldened by the Mamata Banerjee regime's culture of violence and impunity, attacked me right in the presence of the Mamata Police," he said.

Nine named

Mr. Adhikari gave a written complaint at the local police station naming nine persons, all "known Trinamool faces".

The BJP MLA also alleged that the local police did not intervene and remained spectators when he was attacked. Mr. Adhikari added that it was not just an attack on him but the entire Opposition.

Mr. Adhikari and BJP handles on social media shared the video of the said attack. It showed two groups of men carrying BJP and Trinamool flags quarreling on the road. The BJP workers reportedly wanted to felicitate Mr. Adhikari when they were allegedly attacked by the Trinamool workers.

It is alleged that Mr. Adhikari vehicle was attacked with sticks and bamboo. Slogans and counter-slogans continued on both sides. Even after the scuffle, the police did not reach the site, the BJP said.

The Trinamool has not responded to the allegations till now.

Mamata writes again to CEC alleging 'harassment' over SIR

West Bengal Chief Minister flags hearing notices sent to prominent personalities including Nobel laureate Amartya Sen; 'it is a matter of profound shame', she says calling the process 'inhuman'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

> It is shocking that an exercise which should have been constructive and productive has already seen 77 deaths, with four attempts to suicide and 17 persons falling sick and requiring hospitalisation. This is attributed to fear, intimidation and disproportionate workload due to unplanned exercise undertaken by the EC
>
> **MAMATA BANERJEE**
> West Bengal Chief Minister

Raising the issue of hearing notices under special intensive revision (SIR) being sent to prominent personalities, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote yet another letter to Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Saturday, alleging harassment of common citizens and eminent individuals alike.

"It is a matter of profound shame that Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen – a nonagenarian and a globally respected intellectual has been asked to appear before the Election Commission [EC] officials to establish his credentials. Similarly, eminent and widely respected personalities such as renowned poet and awardee Joy Goswami, popular film actor and Member of Parliament Shri Deepak Adhikari, international cricketer Mohammed Shami and the Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sangha have also been subjected to this unplanned, insensitive and inhuman process," the Chief Minister said in the letter. A notice for the SIR hearing was sent to professor Sen earlier this month but later the EC issued an order, saying that overseas citizens are exempted from the SIR hearing.

Ms. Banerjee said there are many more who have been put to such undue harassment. This was the fourth letter which Ms. Banerjee wrote to Mr. Kumar since the start of the SIR.

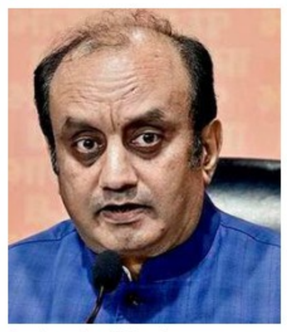
"The so-called logical discrepancy numbers are increasing by the day. It has been reported that the portal being used for West Bengal is apparently different from that used in other States," she wrote in the letter.

As in her earlier letters, the Chief Minister referred to deaths allegedly linked to the SIR exercise. "It is shocking that an exercise which should have been constructive and productive has already seen 77 deaths, with 4 attempts at suicide and 17 persons falling sick and requiring hospitalisation. This is attributed to fear, intimidation, and disproportionate workload due to unplanned exercise undertaken by the EC" she wrote. Ms. Banerjee also wrote in the letter that the objective of SIR seems neither of correction nor of inclusion in the electoral rolls, but solely of deletion and exclusion.

Meanwhile, in another development, the EC appointed four more special roll observers for overseeing SIR exercise in West Bengal. This move follows the previous deployment of 18 roll observers and one special roll observer to oversee the SIR process in the State.

INDIA bloc taking contradictory stance on SIR: BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Sudhanshu Trivedi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday accused the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) of taking contradictory positions and making confusing arguments regarding the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

At a press briefing, BJP MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said that the Opposition parties seemed unsure about their own position, with their leaders changing their claims about the impact of exercise. He said that the matter had become a "tricky question" for the alliance, as its constituents were unable to maintain a consistent narrative.

Mr. Trivedi pointed to comments by Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, who had earlier alleged that the BJP's votes were being reduced through the exercise. The BJP leader said the Congress had claimed that SIR was being used to reduce Opposition votes, but now it was being suggested that the process was aimed at adding votes.

He also referred to Mr. Yadav's earlier assertion that at the booth level, SP workers had ensured that its votes were protected, and the subsequent allegation from within the bloc that the BJP was benefiting from the process.

Questioning the credibility of the claims, Mr. Trivedi asserted that SIR is a constitutional and procedural exercise, stating that it neither disadvantages nor benefits any political party.

'Rajasthan's crime rate drops 14% under BJP'

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that paper leaks in government recruitment examinations had stopped under Bharatiya Janata Party rule in Rajasthan, while the State government had reduced the crime rate by 14% and increased the conviction rate from 41% to 60%.

Mr. Shah symbolically distributed appointment letters to 10 police constables among the 9,000 recruited recently, including 2,500 women, at the Rajasthan Police Academy here. Addressing the gathering, he said transparency in public services recruitment was essential for good governance and that no State could progress if there was corruption in the appointment process.

"The Bhajan Lal Sharma government has ended the paper leak culture, which started during the [previous] Congress regime, and liberated Rajasthan from this practice," Mr. Shah said.

JD(U) distances itself from K.C. Tyagi's demand for Bharat Ratna to Nitish Kumar

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

K.C. Tyagi and Nitish Kumar at Janata Dal (United) national executive meeting in Patna in 2019. FILE PHOTO

Days after Janata Dal (United) senior leader K.C. Tyagi demanded that India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, be conferred on Nitish Kumar – whom he described as the "precious gem of socialist movement"– the party on Saturday distanced itself from the remark.

"In the recent past, Mr. Tyagi has made several statements which have not been in line with the party's ideology, and they were not the official stand of the party. The statements were his personal views. Even several party workers are not sure whether Mr. Tyagi continues to hold any post in the party or not?" JD(U) national spokesperson Rajeev Ranjan Prasad said on Saturday. He said, "Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is healthy and continuously serving the people of the State."

Party MLC and spokesperson Neeraj Kumar said, "Only Mr. Tyagi knows what he says, and the JD(U) is not concerned with what he says. Nitish Kumar has been called a global thinker... Nitish Kumar has a colossal personality, and awards chase him," the JD (U) leader said. No other party leader, nor the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, has made any comment yet on what Mr. Tyagi had demanded.

However, Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Jitan Ram Manjhi, who belongs to the NDA ally Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), made a similar demand in a social media post. "I have full faith that Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, who is known for surprising everyone with his decisions, will once again do so by deciding to confer the Bharat Ratna on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar ji. *Bharat Ratna Nitish Kumar*– how pleasing those words sound to the ear," Mr. Manjhi wrote.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, former chief general secretary and national spokesperson of the JD(U) and party MP K.C. Tyagi wrote, "The precious gem of socialist movement, Nitish Kumar ji, is also deserving of this honour [the Bharat Ratna]. Earlier, several living individuals have been conferred the same award. So, on behalf of billions of people, I urge and hope that dear leader Nitish Kumar too should be conferred with this award so that history would appreciate your effort for long."

Meanwhile, senior JD(U) functionaries said that Mr. Tyagi had not been part of the decision-making process in the party for the past several years, but he has not been formally ousted. The decision to publicly clarify that Mr. Tyagi's views did not reflect the party's stance was taken following his recent comments, which the functionary described as "embarrassing".

(With inputs from Sobhana K. Nair)

Family members are ruining a legacy, says Lalu's daughter

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Rohini Acharya

Rohini Acharya, daughter of Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad, lashed out at members of her family on Saturday, accusing them of destroying a legacy and attempting to "wipe out signs of those who gave identity and existence to a legacy" while under the influence of "someone".

"To destroy the 'great legacy' that was created and established with such intense effort, there is no need for outsiders; just a few scheming 'newly made own' among 'our own' and our loved ones are enough," she said in a post on X without naming anyone. "When a veil falls over wisdom, when ego climbs onto the head. Then the 'destroyer' becomes the eyes, nose, and ears, and seizes away the intellect and discernment," she said.

Ms. Acharya lives in Singapore with her husband, Rao Samresh Singh, and their three children, but came into the political limelight in 2022 when she donated her kidney to her ailing father who was suffering from multiple diseases. She was in Bihar during last year's Assembly election.

After the RJD's poll debacle, she posted on X on November 15, saying: "I am quitting politics and I am disowning my family... This is what Sanjay Yadav and Rameez had asked me to do and I am taking all the blame."

Long-running feud

Sanjay Yadav is a Rajya Sabha member and political adviser to Ms. Acharya's brother and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. Rameez Nemat Khan is said to be Mr. Yadav's old friend who hails from a political family in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. Ms. Acharya's post on X on Saturday may also be an indirect attack against the duo whom she had criticised earlier as well.

Weeks before the election, Ms. Acharya had expressed her disappointment over Mr. Sanjay Yadav's expanding influence within the RJD and his proximity to Mr. Tejashwi Yadav.

In September 2025, she had shared the Facebook post of a social media influencer who objected to Mr. Sanjay Yadav occupying the front seat of the campaign bus leading the Bihar Adhikar Yatra, saying that seat is always reserved for the top leadership of the party such as the RJD chief and his son.

Earlier, without naming anyone, Ms. Acharya had alleged that she was humiliated and abused, with slippers being raised to hit her, simply because she did would not compromise on her self-respect. She had been left at home crying and orphaned, she had written in a post on the social media platform X.

Cong. seeks impartial probe into Ankita Bhandari murder

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

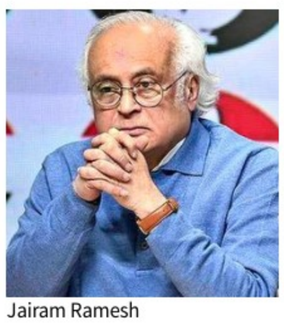
The Congress on Saturday called for a time-bound and independent CBI probe into the 2022 murder of Ankita Bhandari, insisting that the Central agency conclude the inquiry within six months and act against those accused of destroying evidence.

The demand follows Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami's decision to recommend a CBI inquiry into the killing of the 19-year-old resort receptionist, a move made after repeated appeals by her parents.

The State unit of the Congress has been pressing for probe by a Central agency, citing what it says are new developments in the case. Addressing a press meet, Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba said the probe must focus on the "VIP angle" and ensure accountability for violations of workplace safety norms. The Mahila Congress questioned the demolition of the resort where Ankita worked, which it said led to the destruction of evidence.

Congress launches 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram' against new rural jobs law

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Jairam Ramesh

The Congress on Saturday launched a 45-day nationwide agitation, the 'MGNREGA Bachao Sangram', opposing the replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) with the newly enacted Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G) law.

The campaign, which will continue till February 25, seeks to press for the withdrawal of the VB-G RAM G Act, and the restoration of the MGNREGA in its original form as a rights-based law guaranteeing employment, strengthening the role of panchayats, and ensuring accountability in implementation.

The party organised press conferences at district headquarters across the country on Saturday, highlighting what it described as the manner in which MGNREGA was repealed and replaced during the Winter Session of Parliament. District-level protests and a day-long fast are scheduled for January 11. The party would continue the agitation until the "right to work, livelihood and accountability" was restored, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said.

"The Congress is committed to seeing this struggle through until we secure the restoration of the right to work, livelihood, and accountability that the Modi government has snatched with its bulldozer demolition of the MGNREGA," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X.

The programme outlines phased mobilisation across rural and urban areas. From January 12 to 29, the party will organise *chaupals* (village gatherings) and mass contact programmes at the gram panchayat level. This will be followed by ward-level peaceful sit-ins on January 30 to press for the right to work. Between February 7 and 15, the Congress plans State-level *gheraos* of Vidhan Sabhas, before concluding the campaign with four major rallies.

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A BG-BGE

INBRIEF

Two more held in Turkman Gate demolition drive clash

Two more persons were arrested on Friday for allegedly throwing stones at the police during a Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) demolition drive around Faiz-e-Ilahi mosque near Turkman Gate earlier this week, bringing the total number of arrests in the case to 13. As part of their investigation into the incident, the police have identified and are analysing the social media accounts of several influencers who shared videos about the demolition. "We are scrutinising their role in the stone-pelting incident," a senior officer said, adding that they are also probing the role of a Samajwadi Party MP. The police deployed a large number of security personnel to maintain law and order.

Assam holds review meeting ahead of Prime Minister's visit

Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota on Saturday held a review meeting to assess preparedness for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Kaliabor in Nagaon district on January 18, officials said. Mr. Modi is scheduled to arrive in the State on January 17 on a two-day visit. He will witness the Bodo folk dance Bagrumba at the Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Stadium before proceeding to Kaliabor the next day to lay the foundation stone of the ₹6,957-crore Kaziranga Elevated Corridor. He is also scheduled to virtually flag off two Amrit Bharat Express trains and address a public meeting at Kaliabor. PTI

AAP stages protest in Punjab against Atishi's 'edited' video

The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday staged protests across Punjab, accusing the BJP, Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal of hurting religious sentiments by circulating a "doctored" video of senior party leader and former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi. The AAP alleged that the "edited" video, which amounted to "*beadbi*" (sacrilege) of the Guru Sahib, was circulated on social media for political gain. The party also said an FIR has been registered in the matter, and a forensic examination had "confirmed deliberate manipulation" of the clip. An FIR was filed in connection with uploading and circulating the "edited" video of Atishi in the Delhi Assembly. PTI

BJP objects to Owaisi view on Muslim woman as PM

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi has said a hijab-clad woman will one day become India's Prime Minister as the country's Constitution accords equal status to people from all communities, unlike in Pakistan, where people of only one religion can be at the top constitutional posts. He said,"The Constitution of Pakistan says that only a person belonging to one religion can become the country's Prime Minister. But the Indian Constitution states that any citizen can become the Prime Minister, or even a Mayor." His remark drew a sharp reaction from the ruling BJP, which said that his statement is "irresponsible". PTI

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	6	3	2	9	5	7	8	1
5	2	8	7	3	1	4	6	9
9	7	1	4	6	8	3	2	5
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1	8	7	5	2	4	6	9	3
2	9	6	3	1	7	5	4	8
7	4	2	8	5	3	9	1	6
8	3	9	1	4	6	2	5	7
6	1	5	9	7	2	8	3	4

No separate recognition needed for MBBS seats: NMC

Once seats are approved or renewed annually, that batch will be treated as recognised for that year, regulatory body tells medical colleges; directs them to submit only an annual report and fee

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has directed medical colleges not to submit separate proposals for recognition of MBBS seats, clarifying that the annual renewal of seats itself will be treated as recognition under the current regulatory framework.

"The commission has issued the clarification after the Undergraduate Medical Education Board (UGMEB) started receiving applications from some medical colleges for recognition, along with fees. Now we have made it clear that there is no need for separate applications for recognition of MBBS seats and fee structure,'' said a Union Health Ministry official. The earlier practice of granting separate recognition to MBBS seats had been discontinued following the implementation of the Maintenance of Standards of Medical Education Regulations, 2023.

Earlier practice of granting separate recognition to MBBS seats had been discontinued under fresh regulations issued in 2023. FILE PHOTO

As per these regulations, medical colleges are required to submit only the annual disclosure report (ADR) along with the prescribed fee on the NMC portal, as and when called for. The ADR is a mandatory report, which colleges submit to the NMC with details on their infrastructure and ability to maintain standards needed to conduct the medical courses.

Once MBBS seats are approved or renewed annually, the permitted batch and the seats will be treated as recognised for that particular academic year, the NMC said in its order. Such medical colleges and institutions will be considered accredited ones for the said courses, it added.

Woman dead after quack delivers her of baby watching video

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The clinic in Bihar, which does not even sport a signboard, was suggested by an ASHA worker

A 23-year-old pregnant woman died of excessive bleeding after a quack delivered her of the baby watching YouTube videos in a sham surgery in Bhagalpur district of Bihar, officials said on Saturday.

The death happened on Thursday night but it came to light on Saturday with the Bhagalpur Civil Surgeon forming a team to catch hold of the quack.

A local villager said the woman developed labour pain and was brought to the unauthorised clinic where the quack and an assistant watched online videos to understand the operation procedures. In the middle of the surgery, the woman began bleeding profusely and her condition turned critical, he said, adding that the baby boy survived.

The quack fled the clinic while the woman died there without receiving treatment.

Police personnel from the local station arrived at the clinic and sent the body for a post-mortem.

The clinic, which does not even have a signboard, was apparently suggested by an ASHA worker.

Bhagalpur Civil Surgeon Ashok Kumar said an investigation is being conducted by the team. The doctor said action would be taken against whoever was found guilty.

Fear looms over Himachal apple growers as dry spell, lack of snow continue in the State

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

A prolonged dry spell and lack of snowfall in Himachal Pradesh have left apple growers and horticulture experts anxious, with fears that if current conditions persist, the apple crop could suffer significant losses in yield and production.

The concerns are not unfounded as, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), dry weather conditions are likely to prevail over the State in the coming week as well. The IMD forecast on Saturday also pointed out that the minimum temperature could see a gradual rise of about two to five degrees Celsius over the next four or five days.

"Since the middle of October until now it has been mostly dry weather in Himachal Pradesh. In November, the State saw 95% less rainfall than normal and in December, the rain was 99% below normal. There's hardly any chance of rain or snow in the State in the next week as well," Sandeep Kumar Sharma, senior scientist at IMD, Shimla, told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

The apple industry is the backbone of the State's economy, contributing nearly ₹6,000 crore annually. FILE PHOTO

Apple growers and horticulture experts assert that prolonged dry conditions are not favourable for the apple crop, as it could adversely affect quality and productivity. New apple plantations in orchards are particularly susceptible to dry climatic conditions and could face damage.

Backbone of the State

Apple is the most important fruit crop of Himachal Pradesh, accounting for about 49% of the total area under fruit crops and about 85% of the total fruit production.

"There has been no snow so far, which is not a good sign for the crop. Without adequate snow and cold, trees may experience poor flowering, uneven bud break and reduced fruit set. Drier conditions will allow more pests to survive, potentially increasing infestations during the growing season," Bhupinder Sharma, an apple grower from Kotgarh village in Shimla district, said. The apple industry is the backbone of Himachal Pradesh's economy, contributing approximately ₹5,000 crore to ₹6,000 crore annually and supporting over 1.5 lakh families, primarily small and marginal farmers.

Consider Romeo-Juliet clause in POCSO: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has asked the Union government to introduce a 'Romeo-Juliet' clause in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act to exempt genuine adolescent relationships from criminal prosecution by their families and others who use the law to "settle scores".

The clause is a legal exemption to protect consensual sexual activity among teenagers who are close in age from prosecution for statutory rape.

"POCSO cases filed at the behest of a girl's family objecting to romantic involvement with a young boy have become commonplace and consequent thereto these young boys languish in jails," Justice Sanjay Karol observed in the post-script of a January 9 judgment authored by him.

The court ordered the judgment copy to be circulated to the Union Law Secretary in order to take steps to "curb this menace". The court noted that it had repeatedly come across the abuse of POCSO.

'Tool for revenge'

"When an instrument of such noble and, one may even say, basic good intent is misapplied and used as a tool for exacting revenge, the notion of justice itself teeters on the edge of inversion. Courts have in many cases sounded alarm regarding this situation," Justice Karol wrote.

Delhi HC asks Centre to consider pension plea

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre to consider the plea of a former government employee, who retired in 2012, to include the names of his live-in partner and their children in the Pension Payment Order for family pension and healthcare facilities. A two-judge Bench also quashed a 2018 order of the Central Administrative Tribunal upholding a decision to withhold 50% of his monthly pensionary and gratuity benefits.

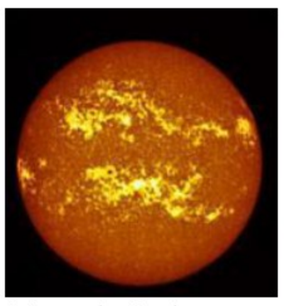
Aditya-L1 decoded how solar storms impact earth's magnetic field: ISRO

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Saturday said its Aditya-L1 solar mission had provided new insights into how a powerful solar storm could impact earth's magnetic shield.

"The most severe effects occurred during the impact of the turbulent region of the solar storm," the space agency said in a statement.

In a breakthrough study published in *The Astrophysical Journal* in December, ISRO scientists and research students analysed a major space weather event that struck earth in October 2024.



An image showing the sun as captured by Aditya-L1 during a solar storm in 2024. FILE PHOTO

The study used observations from Aditya-L1, India's first solar observatory, along with data from other international space missions to decode the impact of a massive eruption of solar plasma from the sun.

Space weather events

"Space weather refers to conditions in space caused by transient activity on the sun, such as solar plasma eruptions, which can affect satellites, communication and navigation services, and power grid infrastructure on earth," the statement said.

According to ISRO, the turbulent region of the solar storm "strongly compressed the earth's magnetic field, pushing it unusually close to the earth and briefly exposing some satellites in geostationary orbit to harsh space conditions."

The space agency noted that this phenomenon occurs only during severe space weather events.

The study also revealed that during the turbulent phase, currents in the auroral region (high latitudes) super-intensified, a process that could heat the upper atmosphere and lead to enhanced atmospheric escape.

Govt. launches drive to reduce road accident deaths

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, in collaboration with the NGO Save Life Foundation, has identified 100 districts with the highest number of road crashes to launch a data-driven zero-fatalities programme, in line with the government's pledge to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2030.

The 100 districts span 15 States, with the programme already rolled out in all 20 identified districts in Uttar Pradesh, 19 in Tamil Nadu, 11 in Maharashtra, and nine in Karnataka.

"Districts have been identified as key units of change, as 63% of road accident fatalities occur outside National Highways, such as on State Highways and State expressways, major district roads and local roads. Since crash deaths are often influenced by local factors such as road design, traffic enforcement, and hospital preparedness, effective interventions are best coordinated at the district level, where administration converges through measures like traffic policing and emergency medical care," said Founder and CEO of Save Life Foundation Piyush Tewari at a press conference held at the recently concluded two-day conference of Transport Ministers, Secretaries and Commissioners of all States and Union Territories.

The Transport Ministry will focus on 100 high-risk districts that account for the highest number of accidents. FILE PHOTO

An analysis across the 100 districts recorded nearly 89,000 road deaths in 2023 and 2024. The foundation mapped 17,331 critical crash locations, which together accounted for 58% of the total fatalities. It also identified high-risk time windows during which most crashes occurred, enabling law enforcement agencies to better target resource deployment. An analysis of the crashes showed that rear-end collisions accounted for 26% of fatalities, head-on collisions for 23%, and pedestrian crashes for another 23%.

The framework for the zero-fatalities programme includes engineering audits and the implementation of low-cost, quick-build safety interventions, such as correcting faulty road intersections. A key pillar is trauma care response, with measures to improve ambulance response time standards and train first responders.

Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said the District Collectors, Transport Ministers, and MPs from the 100 districts will be part of an accident prevention committee and will be invited to New Delhi for a conference.

INBRIEF

Techno Paints to file DRHP for ₹500 crore IPO in FY27

Techno Paints and Chemicals plans to file draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for a ₹500 crore initial public offering (IPO) in 2026-27. The process is expected to be completed in the same financial year, CMD Akuri Srinivas Reddy said on Saturday announcing that the firm had roped in cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar as brand ambassador for three years. He said the firm's revenue in 2024-25 stood at ₹210 crore and is expected to touch ₹450 crore this fiscal.

Moody's changes Shriram Finance's outlook to positive

Moody's Ratings has affirmed Shriram Finance Ltd.'s Ba1 long-term corporate family rating. The outlook has been changed to positive from stable. On December 19, 2025, SFL announced that MUFG Bank Ltd. will acquire a 20% stake in the company through a preferential allotment of shares for ₹39,600 crore (about $4.4 billion). The transaction is expected to close in 2026. A sustained improvement in profitability is a key monitorable for the upgrade, the agency said.

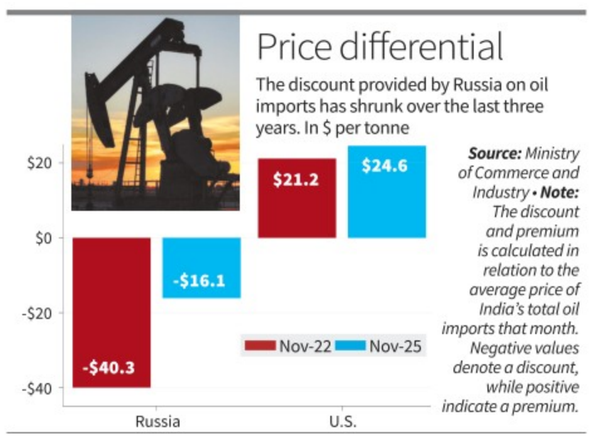
Kia India showcases All-New Seltos in Chennai

Kia India on Saturday showcased the All-New Kia Seltos in Chennai. The model has been unveiled at a starting price of ₹10.99 lakh (ex-showroom). The vehicle will be available in 10 mono-tone colour options, including two new colours - Morning Haze and Magma Red. "The All-New Kia Seltos underlines our commitment to bringing globally competitive, customer-centric products to the Indian market," Atul Sood, Senior VP, Sales & Marketing, Kia India said.

'Shifting from Russian oil imports will currently not hurt India financially'

Data shows that while the premium paid on oil from the U.S. has remained largely the same as three years ago, the discount received from Russia has shrunk considerably

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI



The prevailing low global oil prices mean that, if India chooses to shift away from importing Russian oil and switches to more oil from the U.S., the financial impact of this would be limited, according to experts as well an analysis of India's import data.

An analysis by *The Hindu* of the volume and value of India's oil imports show that in November 2025, the latest month for which there is data, India imported oil from Russia at the rate of $482.7 per tonne.

That month, oil imports from the U.S. cost $523.3 per tonne. On average, India paid $498.8 per tonne for its oil imports in November 2025.

In other words, in November 2025, India received an average discount of $16.1 per tonne from Russia, while it bought oil at an average premium of $24.6 per tonne from the U.S.

Declining discount

Data shows that, while the premium paid on oil from the U.S. has remained largely the same as three years ago, the discount received from Russia has shrunk considerably.

Three years earlier, in November 2022, India received a discount of $40.3 a tonne on its oil imports from Russia. The premium paid on American oil stood at $21.2 per tonne.

"India was very keen to keep importing from Russia at a discounted rate while a discount existed," Vibhuti Garg, Director for South Asia at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said.

"But that discount has now gone and global oil prices have fallen significantly. They are at about $60 a barrel and could fall further. So, if India does cut down on its Russian oil imports significantly, this won't currently be damaging fiscally.

However, she added that, if in the future prices go back up to $80-90 a barrel, then the lack of this Russian discount could start pinching the Indian government. A previous report by *The Hindu* shows how India's oil imports from Russia touched a six-month high in November 2025.

However, since then, Reliance Industries, one of the biggest oil importers in India, said that it had not received any oil shipments from Russia in the last three weeks of December 2025 and did not expect any in January 2026.

Limited impact

According to Ajay Srivastava, founder of think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative and former Director General of Foreign Trade in the Government of India, the premium paid to the U.S. also reflects the superior quality of the oil supplied by it.

"Until 2023-24, Russian oil was about 20% cheaper than what we could get in the market," Mr. Srivastava said. "That price differential has evaporated since then. There is also a quality difference between the oil that we get from Russia and the US. Russian oil is largely heavy crude, with a higher sulfur content, which is considered lower quality, while the US crude is lighter and of better quality." He added that reducing oil imports from Russia would not have any financial impact on India.

"While strategic concerns are different, economically it will not make much of a difference," Mr. Srivastava said.

Other risks arise

Puneet Kumar, Partner, Energy Sector at EY-Parthenon India said that, with about 35% of India's oil imports originating in Russia, there is a risk to India from cutting down on Russian oil. But he, too, acknowledged that this risk is currently likely to be offset due to the low global oil prices.

However, he pointed out other factors that could put a strain on India's finances if they persist.

"These gains would be partially negated by other economic factors, including recent depreciation of the Indian rupee (around 5% this year) and increased logistics cost from U.S.," Mr. Kumar said.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal in conversation with EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič, in Brussels . ANI

Goyal ends Brussels trip, confident of 'early conclusion' of FTA talks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal concluded a two-day visit to Brussels on Friday, which marked a "decisive step" forward in the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, the government said in a statement on Saturday.

During his visit, Mr. Goyal held a series of high-level dialogues with EU Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security Maroš Šefčovič, with both leaders providing guidance to negotiating teams to resolve pending issues and expedite the agreement.

"During their engagement, Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal and Commissioner Šefčovič carried out detailed deliberations across key areas of the proposed agreement," the statement said. "Both sides took note of the steady progress achieved across various negotiating tracks including market access for goods, rules of origin, services etc."

It added that the Ministerial meetings capped a week of "intensive diplomatic and technical engagements" in Brussels. The Ministerial meetings were preceded by high-level discussions between Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal and Director-General for Trade of the European Commission Sabine Weyand on January 6-7, 2026.

"The meetings focused on stocktaking the progress achieved across various negotiating tracks," the statement added. "The officials worked to narrow divergences and ensure clarity on outstanding issues, clearing the path for the Ministerial dialogue."

It added that Mr. Goyal's visit concluded with both sides expressing confidence and a renewed determination towards the "early conclusion of a modern, comprehensive, and mutually beneficial agreement".

India's 2025 rice exports surge to near record as curbs lifted

Reuters
RAIPUR

India's rice exports jumped 19.4% last year to the second-highest on record after New Delhi lifted all export curbs, making shipments more competitive, government and industry officials told *Reuters* on Saturday.

An improved flow of rice from the world's largest exporter of the grain curbed shipments from rivals Thailand and Vietnam and drove prices in Asia to their lowest in nearly a decade, easing costs for poor consumers in Africa and other regions.

Quick rebound

"Indian shipments rebounded quickly after the government lifted export restrictions" in March, said a government official, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

As supplies improved with record production, India removed the last of the export curbs imposed in 2022 and 2023.

Exports rose to 21.55 million metric tons from 18.05 million in 2024, near the 2022 record of 22.3 million tons, the official said.

Non-basmati rice shipments jumped 25% to 15.15 million tons, while basmati exports increased 8% to a record 6.4 million tons, he said.

Non-basmati rice shipments rose sharply to Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Djibouti, while Iran, the UAE and Britain increased purchases of premium basmati rice during the year, said another government official.

AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE TAX RECOVERY OFFICER (CENTRAL), KOCHI

Immovable properties (land- 16 Cents & Villa- 2973 Sq. Ft.) situated at Vennala in Ernakulam district attached by Income Tax Department will be sold in public auction through E-auction on MSTC platform at **11:00 A.M.** on **28th January 2026**. Auction notices of the property, terms and conditions and photos of properties can be viewed on www.mstcindia.co.in. Scan QR code for direct access to link. Intending bidders may please register with www.mstcecommerce.com by remitting one time registration (nonrefundable) charges of Rs. 1000/- + GST. EMD is Rs. 1 lakh.

Contact : -
For Registration: Shri Santhosh Kumar (MSTC) (Mob:8884600700)
For Details: Smt. Anitha Devi J, Tax Recovery Officer (Central) (Mob: 8547000116/8075130138).

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
SOUTHERN REGION FARM MACHINERY TRAINING & TESTING INSTITUTE
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Web.: http://srfmtti.dacnet.nic.in
File No: 16-53/23-24-Test Dated:10.01.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
CONCESSION IN TESTING FEE FOR ELIGIBLE START-UPS

Eligible Start-ups are hereby informed that the testing fee for agricultural machines is offered at 50% of the full test fee, as applicable for the respective category of machines. Interested Start-ups may avail this opportunity for testing & certification of agricultural machinery. For eligibility criteria, detailed guidelines, and application procedure, please visit our website **https://srfmtti.dacnet.nic.in/index.html.**

Sd/- DIRECTOR, SRFMTTI

Dr. Reddy's biologics unit gets U.S. FDA queries

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has been issued a post-application action letter (PAAL), with queries, related to its biologics manufacturing facility in Hyderabad by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The letter follows the pre-approval inspection of the facility in September 2025 and issue of Form 483 with five observations. The company had consequently submitted its response.

सीएसआईआर–संरचनात्मक अभियांत्रिकी अनुसंधान केंद्र, चेन्नै
CSIR-STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING RESEARCH CENTRE, CHENNAI
(वैज्ञानिक तथा औद्योगिक अनुसंधान परिषद् Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)
सीएसआईआर परिसर CSIR Campus, तरमणि Taramani, चेन्नै Chennai - 600 113, भारत INDIA
दूरभाष Tel : 044 - 2254 9108 / 4777, 22541238 फैक्स Fax : 044-22542211
ई-मैल E-mail : puroff.serc@csir.res.in

अभिरुचि अभिव्यक्ति (ईओआई) आमंत्रण सूचना संबंधी शुद्धिपत्र
CORRIGENDUM TO NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

फ़ाइल सं.File No. A3(72560)2025/PUR/SERC सीपीपीपी निविदा प.सं. CPPP Tender ID: 2025_CSIR_258893_1

आपूर्ति, संस्थापन, एकीकरण, कमीशनिंग, परीक्षण, प्रशिक्षण एवं प्रलेखन हेतु अत्याधुनिक वास्तविक समय अंकीय संकर नियंत्रण तंत्र तथा सर्वो मोटर ड्राइव सहित विद्युत विंचों के लिए गैर–प्रतिबद्ध अभिरुचि अभिव्यक्ति (ईओआई) आमंत्रण सूचना, जो 21.12.2025 को प्रकाशित की गई थी तथा जिसकी पूर्व–निविदा सम्मेलन की तिथि 19.01.2026 निर्धारित थी, के संबंध में निम्नलिखित शुद्धिपत्र जारी किया जाता है। उक्त सूचना को निम्नानुसार संशोधित किया जाता है:

The following Corrigendum is hereby issued in the Notice Inviting Non – Committal Expression of Interest (EoI) for Supply, Installation, Integration, Commissioning, Testing, Training and Documentation for State-of-the-Art Real Time Digital Hybrid Control System and Electrical Winches with Servo Motor Drive published on 21.12.2025 with Pre-Indent Conference date 19.01.2026 - stands revised as below.

पूर्व–निविदा सम्मेलन Pre-Indent Conference	
विद्यमान दिनांक एवं समय / Existing Date & Time	संशोधित दिनांक एवं समय / Revised Date & Time
19.01.2026, पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे / 19.01.2026 @ 11:00 AM	27.01.2026, पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे / 27.01.2026 @ 11:00 AM

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A BG-BGE

Aerosols aloft lift, thicken winter fog over North India: IIT-M study

Vasudevan Mukunth

Winter fog is a familiar hazard across the Indo-Gangetic Plain, reducing visibility for hours at once. The fog often forms inside polluted air near the ground and polluted events tend to last longer. Forecasters have been trying to understand the fog's vertical structure, i.e. how thick the fog layer is, because thickness helps determine how long it will persist.

New research from IIT-Madras has reported based on 15 years of CALIPSO satellite data that aerosol loading above fog over the Plain thickens fog layers. The top rises while the base stays near the ground, and droplets near the top become larger. The findings were published in Science Advances on January 9.

The researchers created a number called AODFOG to estimate how much dust and smoke sat in the air above a layer. Then they looked at a part of the Plain where thick fog occurs often and compared days with low AODFOG (less pollution overhead) to those with high AODFOG. On more polluted days, the layer was about 17% thicker because its top rose higher.

Next, the researchers used MODIS satellite data to estimate the size of water droplets near the top. On days with high AODFOG, the droplets were slightly bigger on average.

Finally, the team used a weather model to replay a major fog event in January 2014.

The model suggested a self-strengthening cycle: when there were more pollutants in the air, there were more 'seeds' for water vapour to stick to, so more fog droplets formed. As vapour condensed, it released some heat.

As many droplets formed, the heat could stir the fog and help it mix upwards.

At the same time, a fog layer with many droplets could lose heat more efficiently by emitting infrared radiation, keeping the air near the top cold and humid, conducive for more water vapour to condense there.

'Vicious cycle'

"North India's winter haze is a vicious cycle: aerosols fuel fog, fog traps pollution, impacting air quality, aviation, and daily life. Tackling air pollution can clear skies, boost health, and energise the economy," IIT-Madras earth system scientist and study corresponding author Chandan Sarangi told The Hindu.

The team also said soot can absorb sunlight and warm air near or above the fog, a "semi-direct" effect they didn't isolate because aerosol properties above the fog are poorly known and observations are too sparse to constrain the model. This is a limitation.

How a diamond defect is changing quantum physics

Nitrogen-vacancy centres in diamonds keep quantum spins coherent at room temperature, rendering them ultra-small sensors; scientists have shown that packing trillions of them together can pave the way for a superradiant maser

Vasudevan Mukunth

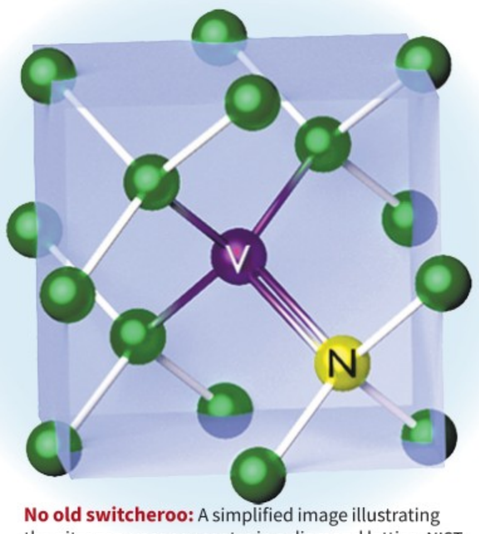
Imagine a diamond. You probably thought of a clear and flawless gemstone used in jewellery. But to a physicist, a perfect diamond might actually be boring. Something magical happens when the diamond is just a little 'broken'.

For decades, scientists have been fascinated by a type of defect in the diamond crystal lattice called the nitrogen-vacancy (NV) centre. A diamond is a rigid grid of carbon atoms; an NV centre occurs here when one carbon atom is replaced by a nitrogen atom and the spot next to it is made vacant.

Bucket brigade

A phenomenon usually considered a nuisance has been used to power a small maser

- Physicists have been interested in 'slightly imperfect' diamonds because nitrogen-vacancy (NV) centres give them useful quantum properties
- An NV centre forms when a nitrogen atom replaces a carbon atom and the neighbouring site is made vacant
- The NV centre has a quantum spin that stays coherent in the diamond, enabling precise sensing of electric, magnetic fields
- NV centres can be 'read' easily because green light drives a red fluorescence tied to the state of the spin
- Dense NV centres usually cause decoherence, but a new has study exploited these interactions to create a maser
- In a superconducting cavity, trillions of NV centres sustained microwave emission for one millisecond, a long time



No old switcheroo: A simplified image illustrating the nitrogen-vacancy centre in a diamond lattice. NIST

Magnetic arrows

The NV centre behaves like a single atom trapped in a solid cage, giving it remarkable abilities.

The centre has a property called spin. Think of it as a small magnetic arrow. Because the NV centre is trapped inside the diamond structure, it's shielded from much of the noise that would otherwise scramble its spin. This helps the spin stay coherent for longer. This is useful because scientists can then measure how the spin's internal energy levels respond to the environment, including very weak magnetic or electric fields.

This makes NV centres some of the world's smallest and most precise sensors. Scientists have been using them to map the magnetic fields associated with brain activity and to detect microscopic cracks in metals.

Most quantum experiments require large and expensive refrigerators to cool atoms down to near absolute zero. If an environment becomes too warm, quantum effects disappear in a chaotic mess. But thanks to their diamond cage, NV centres can hold on to their quantum state even at room temperature, making them more practical for real-world devices, like portable medical scanners.

A useful trait of NV centres is the way they interact with light. If you shine a green laser on it, the centre will glow red, with the brightness depending on the state of its spin. This allows scientists to 'read' the quantum information in the diamond by looking at how much light it emits.

While amazing on their own, matters become complicated when you pack millions of NV centres together. Usually, when these quantum spins are too close to one another, they start interacting in messy ways that destroy the quantum signal. A study published in *Nature Physics* on January 2 has turned this problem on its head. Researchers from Austria and Japan have reported a way to use these noisy interactions to create a powerful and continuous beam of microwave light.

The team took a diamond packed with about 9 trillion NV centres and placed it inside a superconducting microwave cavity, a device that traps microwaves so they can bounce back and forth and build up, like sound echoing in a room. Then they used a microwave pulse to energise the spins of the NV centres.

In standard conditions, the NV centres would release this energy as a quick, bright burst of microwave light called superradiance and stop. In the experiment, however, after the initial burst, the centres started pulsing again, eventually continuously and steadily emitting microwave light for up to 1 ms. This is a very long time in quantum physics.

The team had effectively created a maser – the same thing as a laser but for microwave radiation.

And the very thing usually considered a nuisance, the interaction between spins, was actually powering it.

When the first group of NV centres released their energy into the cavity, they became de-excited (tired). Usually that would be the end of the show. But because the diamond was so dense, these tired spins were surrounded by other energetic spins that weren't quite tuned to the cavity's frequency. Through magnetic dipole-dipole interactions, essentially magnets pushing on magnets, the energetic spins passed their energy to the tired spins. This process re-filled the energy hole left behind by the first burst. It was like the bucket brigade firefighting technique, where neighbouring spins handed off their energy to the spins that could release it as light.

"While the superradiant masing we report is not yet a usable technology, it points toward device concepts that could become interesting in the longer term," Wenzel Kersten of the Atomic Institute of the Vienna University of Technology and the study's first author, told *The Hindu*. Identifying the "indirect contribution" of spin-spin interactions "is a new observation that advances our understanding of such many-body systems."

"Systems capable of continuous superradiant emission could, in principle, serve as ultra-narrow and stable frequency sources, which are valuable for emerging quantum technologies, precision sensing, and related areas such as time-keeping," Dr. Kersten added.

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Do plants listen to music? How do they respond?

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

'Do you play music to your plants?' This was asked of the famous plant biologist James Wong of Kew Gardens in London. He said that it is the vibrations that open the plant's epidermis. So did the physicist J.C. Bose of Kolkata.

What has the latest research into this evergreen question shown?

First, the obvious: plants have neither ears nor brains, so how can they appreciate music as we do? Thanks to a series of recent studies, we now know that they can not only detect vibrations in their environment, but they can also alter their behaviour based on the information they receive.

In one study, a mustard family plant, exposed to the sound of caterpillars chewing, produced higher levels of bitter toxins, which the plant uses as defence. Remarkably, these plants even distinguish the vibrations of leaf munchers from those of wind or insect mating calls, even when these were of a similar frequency, activating defences only when faced with a threat. According to the California Learning Resource Network, the germination of a plant seed is affected when sound is heard (sonic stimulation). Interestingly, the specific frequency range increases water uptake and seed metabolism. Natural sounds, for example, the frequency range of soothing tones and classical music, with well-defined sound notes, seem to affect gene expression and hormone regulation. In contrast, dissonant sounds such as explosives, crackers, and bombs retard seed growth.

Dissonant sounds such as explosives, crackers, and bombs retard seed growth. GETTY IMAGES

Phyto-acoustics

An article in Yale Environmental Review on September 20, 2024, pointed out that using music to enhance crop growth is fascinating as well as crucial for a future that requires sustainable agriculture to support a growing population and reduce environmental harm. In 2020, the plant scientists You-Ning Lal and How-Chiun Wu from the National University of Taiwan studied the effects of different types of music on the germination and seedling growth of the plants alfalfa and lettuce. Specifically, they examined the effects of a variety of music, including Gregorian chants, Baroque, classical, jazz, rock, and nature sounds, on the germination of alfalfa and lettuce seeds. The lettuce was seen to prefer Gregorian chants and waltz, while alfalfa seemed to prefer nature sounds.

According to Pistils Nursery in the U.S., the effects of the types of sound, whether music or noise, and varying their frequency and wavelength, affected the growth of cluster bean seeds in their germination size and quantity.

Some groups in India have also studied the phyto-acoustics of plants. In 2014, V. Chivukula and S. Ramaswamy reported the effect of music on the rose plant, and that the plant preferred Vedic chants rather than jazz for taller growth, in the *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*. In 2015, A.R. Chowdhury and A. Gupta reported playing light classical and meditation music to marigold (genda) and chickpea (chana) plants and the plants growing taller and stronger than when no music was played.

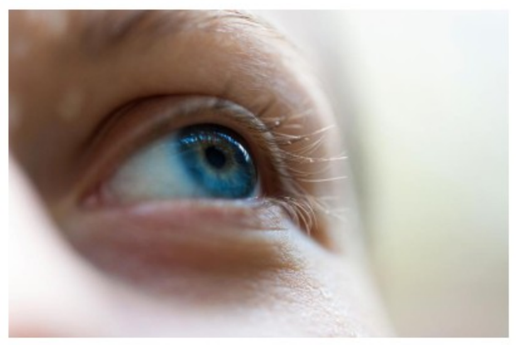
And in 2022, K.R. Shivanna of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment, Bengaluru, in a review in the *Journal of the Indian Botanical Society* in 2022, highlighted these aspects of psychoacoustics and also mentioned the work of J.C. Bose.

So during Deepavali and Holi, let us not blast too many crackers. Plant life is hindered. Instead, play soothing music in your gardens and farms, and the plants will grow better.

SNAPSHOTS

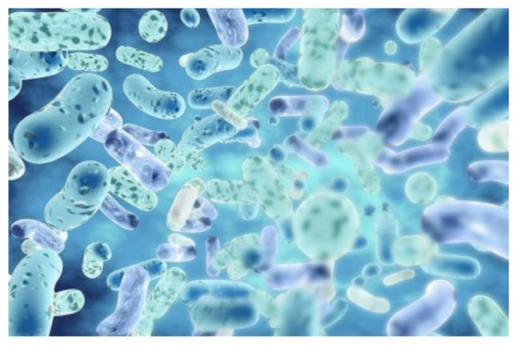
Case builds for African origin of *Homo sapiens*

Human-ancestor fossils in Casablanca, Morocco, including several teeth and neck vertebrae, have been dated to 7.7 lakh years ago, roughly around *Homo antecessor* from Spain, but look different. They combine older traits with features seen later in *H. sapiens*. The authors believe the Moroccan hominins are close to the split between the lineage that led to *H. sapiens* and the Eurasian lineage that produced Neanderthals, strengthening the case for an African origin of our species.



New device to sense eye movement runs on blinking

Scientists have built an eye sensor powered by blinking. A soft friction layer, shaped like a contact lens, sits on the eyeball. Each blink rubs the eyelid against it, electrically charging it. Electrodes on glasses then read the induced voltage for the device to infer gaze direction. The device could detect eye deflections of 2° and classified movements with 99% accuracy in total darkness. The concept could lead to hands-free interfaces for people with severe motor disabilities.



Differences in gut microbiota and brain size

Researchers recently raised germ-free mice and inoculated them with gut microbiota from humans, macaques or squirrel monkeys. Differences between mice with human versus macaque microbiota resembled differences between human and macaque brains. Human microbiota also boosted genes for an important way for cells to make ATP. The find, called "preliminary", suggests microbiomes could support big brains.

Question Corner

Planet origins

Why are the solar system's planets situated where they are and not in a different order?

The planets are in their present order because they formed from the same spinning disk of gas and dust that became the sun. Parts of this protoplanetary disc that were closer to the sun were hotter, so only materials with high melting points, like metals and rocky minerals, could stay solid. These solids clumped into small bodies and eventually into Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.

The disc was cooler farther out, leaving water, ammonia, and methane to freeze. When these lumps became massive enough, they pulled in large quantities of hydrogen and helium before the disk dispersed, creating the giant planets.

While the disc existed, young planets tugged on the surrounding gas and on each other, thus being able to move planets inwards or outwards.

Some evidence suggests the giant planets shifted positions early on. So the current layout reflects both where different materials could form and how planets migrated and reshuffled during the solar system's infancy.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

Is hiring lobby firms common in diplomacy?

How has India explained the use of an American firm for fixing meetings with leaders in Washington?

Suhasini Haidar

The story so far:

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) faced uncomfortable questions this week as filings with the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) showed that the Indian Embassy in Washington used an American lobby firm for unconventional tasks normally done by diplomats. Among other things, the firm fixed meetings for Minister S. Jaishankar and other Indian officials with U.S. leadership, and helped contact the White House during Operation Sindoor and trade talks.

Why does India need to hire lobby firms?

In order to deal with the U.S. government and legislature, hiring lobby firms and advocacy groups is common practice for embassies, business establishments and private organisations. The Indian Embassy in Washington has hired dozens of different firms known as "K-Street" for the street in the U.S. capital they are located, since 1949. For the last few years, the Embassy had focused on three agencies: Republican Party-linked BGR Government Affairs, Democrat Party-linked Cornerstone Government Affairs, and the African American caucus-linked Williams Group (terminated in 2025). In 2025, after the swearing-in of U.S. President Donald Trump, the Embassy hired three more, including two closely linked to Trump associates – SHW LLC headed by former Trump spokesperson and campaign strategist Jason Miller, and Mercury Public Affairs, where White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles was earlier co-chair. SHW LLC was contracted for $1.8 million (₹16 crore) or $1,50,000 a month.

> The Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Embassy have not clarified why the tasks of diplomats to set up meetings were outsourced

Why are latest filings by SHW LLC unusual?

While filings by all the other firms registered and mandated under the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), were routine, a supplementary statement filed in December 2025 by SHW LLC has drawn the most comment. It detailed about 60 entries where it had been asked by the Indian Embassy to contact top officials in the Trump administration to discuss bilateral issues as well as the India-Pakistan conflict from May 7-10. The firm was hired on April 24, following Mr. Trump's call to Mr. Narendra Modi to express his condolences over the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22. While the MEA has consistently denied Mr. Trump's subsequent claims that he mediated an end to the conflict, Mr. Miller, the sole principal at SHW records four calls, including three to White House officials and one to U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on May 10, the day of the ceasefire, to "discuss media coverage of Operation Sindoor" that have not thus far been explained. In June, he records making calls to fix meetings for a number of Indian officials including Mr. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, and the parliamentary delegation led by Shashi Tharoor, with top U.S. leadership like Vice-President J.D. Vance, War Secretary Pete Hegseth and CIA chief John Ratcliffe. Later in the year, as 50% tariffs over Indian import of Russian oil came into focus, SHW was tasked with many more calls over the trade deal, as well as to "flag the White House" on social media posts by Mr. Modi in praise of Mr. Trump. *The Hindu* spoke to several officials and diplomats who said the entries were startling, as such tasks were undertaken by the Indian Embassy, not a foreign lobbyist.

Does Pakistan also use lobby firms?

Yes. According to filings, Pakistan retained at least six lobby firms, spending approximately $6,00,000 a month, about 2-3 times more than India. These firms were tasked with preparing and distributing briefs to promote Pakistan's version of Op Sindoor, as well as its Financial Action Task Force commitments and Kashmir. One lobby firm, Gunster Strategies, hired by Pakistan's Minister of Interior Mohsin Naqvi, set up meetings with congressional members for a visit in January 2025, while others showed a major uptick in outreaches to congressional members in the aftermath of the conflict.

How does the MEA explain the filings?

To a detailed questionnaire sent by *The Hindu*, the Indian Embassy spokesperson said that "it is a standard practice for embassies, private and business organisations in the U.S. to hire the services of lobbyists and consultants to augment outreach." The MEA and the Embassy, however, did not explain why the tasks of diplomats to set up key meetings were outsourced, or why the calls on May 10 were made. Also unanswered is the question of how effective such firms are. India and the U.S. have conflicting narratives over Operation Sindoor. The U.S. imposed 50% of tariffs on Indian goods, with the threat of a further 500% in tariffs due to the Russia Sanctions Act. The India-U.S. trade deal is also yet to be finalised.

Why was bail denied to Umar and Sharjeel?

Why did the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act bail bar prevail against Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam? Why were the two student activists on a 'qualitatively different footing', according to the top court? How does the verdict mark a departure from judicial precedent?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

The Supreme Court on January 5 declined to grant bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case, notwithstanding their incarceration for nearly six years without the commencement of trial.

What did the court rule?

The court held that the constitutional guarantee of personal liberty is not "absolute", and remains subject to the stringent bail regime prescribed under special statutes such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). A Bench comprising Justices Aravind Kumar and N.V. Anjaria, however, granted conditional bail to five other co-accused, observing that the allegations against them indicated conduct of a subsidiary or facilitative nature, thereby warranting differential treatment.

How was a 'hierarchy of roles' established?

The court held that prosecutorial evidence placed Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam on a "qualitatively different footing" from the other accused, warranting a distinct assessment of the "hierarchy of participation". It observed that the two did not stand on equal footing in terms of culpability, since they were the "ideological drivers" who allegedly devised the strategy of converting protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act into disruptive road blockades aimed at paralysing the national capital.

By contrast, the court held that the five accused granted bail were "local-level facilitators", whose alleged roles were confined to logistical arrangements at protest sites. It said their participation was "derivative" in nature, as they merely carried out directions from those positioned higher in the chain of command. In these circumstances, the judges found that continued custody of such "minor participants" would be disproportionate.

> 'Treating allegations of road blockades as terrorist acts risks emboldening governments to weaponise the law'

Selective bail: Umar Khalid being detained by the police during an anti-Citizenship Act protest, at Red Fort, in New Delhi in 2019. PTI

Why did prolonged custody not justify bail?

The accused had argued that their prolonged incarceration without trial violated their fundamental right to a speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution. They had relied on the Supreme Court's 2021 ruling in *Union of India versus K.A. Najeeb*, which had held that the rigours of the stringent bail bar under the UAPA may "melt down" where there is no realistic prospect of the trial being completed within a reasonable time, as continued detention would offend constitutional guarantees. The court, however, distinguished the precedent, observing that it does not lay down a "mechanical rule" whereby delay, by itself, can override the statutory constraints governing bail under the UAPA. It emphasised that Section 43D(5) prescribes a stringent threshold for the grant of bail, which departs from the general principles applicable under ordinary criminal law.

Having found that Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam *prima facie* occupied a "central role" in the alleged offence, the judges observed that the degree of circumspection required before constitutional guarantees are permitted to displace the statutory embargo on bail is "correspondingly greater". By contrast, in the case of the co-accused granted relief, the court noted that the allegations against them were confined to facilitative tasks. In the absence of any "command authority" or capacity to interfere with the trial process, it held that the balance tilted in favour of granting them liberty. The judges also rejected the defence contention that the delay in the trial was attributable solely to the Delhi Police, noting that a perusal of the trial court record showed the prosecution had, at various stages, expressed readiness to commence arguments on the framing of charges, while multiple procedural objections were raised on behalf of the accused.

How expansive is the court's reading of a 'terrorist act'?

Section 15 of the UAPA defines a "terrorist act" as conduct undertaken with the intent to threaten, or likely to threaten, the unity, integrity, security, economic security, or sovereignty of India, or to strike terror among the people or any section thereof. While the provision refers to the use of weapons such as bombs, explosives, or firearms, it also extends to acts committed by "any other means".

The defence had argued that, in the absence of overt violence, the organisation of protests and "chakka jams" (road blockades) attributed to the accused constituted a constitutionally protected form of protest and could not fall within the ambit of Section 15. It had contended that the residual phrase "any other means" must be read *ejusdem generis* (of the same kind) with the preceding reference to violent methods.

Rejecting this submission, the court agreed with the prosecution that Section 15 cannot be read as being confined to the use of conventional weapons alone. It observed that acts resulting in the "sustained choking of arterial roads" and the "systemic disruption of civic life" could attract the provision if they threaten economic security or disrupt essential services. The judges further noted that when such blockades are timed to coincide with major international events, such as the 2020 visit of U.S. President Donald Trump, they *prima facie* constitute an act of terror under the UAPA.

What happens next?

For the five accused granted relief, the apex court imposed onerous conditions to prevent any possibility of tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses. Each was directed to execute a personal bond of ₹2,00,000 with two local sureties and are restrained from leaving the national capital without prior permission of the trial court. Notably, until the conclusion of the trial, they have been barred from addressing or attending any gathering and from circulating any material, including posts in electronic or physical form, of any kind, not limited to the case. In the case of Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam, the court carved out a limited window for them to revive their plea for bail, permitting them to approach the trial court either upon the completion of the examination of the protected witnesses relied upon by the prosecution or upon the expiry of one year from the date of the ruling, whichever is earlier.

What are the implications?

Advocate Vrinda Grover told *The Hindu* that the verdict marks a grave departure from settled judicial precedent. "When an individual is subjected to pre-trial detention, the presumption of innocence continues to operate. Any ruling that renders personal liberty subservient to state interests in such cases is anathema to the Constitution," she said. Ms. Grover further cautioned that treating allegations of road blockades as "terrorist acts" risks emboldening governments to weaponise the law to criminalise dissent. "There is no jurisprudence to support the proposition that *chakka jams* can be treated as acts of terror. On the contrary, past precedents consistently hold that the more draconian the statute, the greater must be the degree of judicial scrutiny to ensure that the allegations squarely fall within its four corners," she added.

How will the U.S. exit affect climate action?

Why has U.S. President Donald Trump moved to withdraw the U.S. from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change? What will be the financial impact? What will it mean for international cooperation on climate change?

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed a presidential memorandum withdrawing from 66 international organisations, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

What does the U.S. exiting the FCCC mean?

Mr. Trump has been calling climate change a hoax. His government is also currently in the process of pulling the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement. On February 4, 2025, he issued an executive order requiring the government "to determine which organisations, conventions, and treaties [to which the U.S. is party] are contrary" to its interests. His decision to exit the FCCC and the IPCC are based on this review.

Pulling out of the FCCC will exclude the U.S. from the core framework that organises almost all multilateral climate diplomacy. For instance, it won't have to participate in the FCCC reporting system, which records countries' greenhouse gas emissions and progress towards their commitments, and thus allows nations to monitor their collective efforts and hold each other accountable. Legally, the FCCC provides a way for countries to withdraw should they see fit. The FCCC also says withdrawing from it is treated as withdrawing from any protocol to which the party belongs. This includes the Paris Agreement. In practical terms, this means the U.S. will cease to be a party inside the system that runs the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) negotiations and the processes by which the rules are drafted for transparency, carbon markets, financial architecture, etc. The country will also lose its ability to negotiate from inside the room at COPs even if it can still attend some meetings as an observer. However, it won't have the legal standing to bargain as a party.

> Pulling out of the FCCC will exclude the U.S. from the core framework that organises almost all multilateral climate diplomacy

Evading responsibility: The Jeffrey Energy Center coal-fired power plant operates at sunset near Emmett, Kansas, U.S. on January 3. AP

How will climate finance be affected?

The FCCC has established a financial mechanism with operating entities including the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, and the COP oversees the arrangements of that mechanism. If the U.S. isn't a party, it will lose its leverage inside the COP over how that financial architecture evolves while also making it politically easier for a U.S. administration to justify withholding contributions.

Conversely, the exit will also raise the 'cost of doing climate business' for U.S. companies. Many private sector enterprises, investors, insurers, and subnational governments currently plan around the expectation that global climate rules will become tighter over time, so the U.S.'s decision to exit the FCCC could signal more policy volatility, in turn increasing risk premiums and leaving U.S. exporters more exposed to foreign climate-related trade measures. For many partner countries climate cooperation has become tied up with broader negotiations on energy security, critical minerals, industrial policy, and development finance. The potential implication here is that countries may now become more unwilling to cut side deals with Washington in adjacent domains because they will have to account for the durability of the U.S.'s commitments.

What does the IPCC do?

The IPCC assesses scientific research on climate change, compiling reports that synthesise the current understanding of climate science, the consequences, and potential strategies policymakers everywhere can implement. Pulling out of the IPCC would weaken the U.S.'s role in owning the shared scientific references climate negotiations rely on. This doesn't automatically mean "American scientists will no longer be involved in climate reports" but it likely will reduce U.S. involvement. The IPCC reports' authors are put together by a process in which governments and observer organisations nominate experts and the IPCC Bureau creates teams. If the U.S. stops nominating, an important pipeline for U.S.-based expertise – which is considerable – becomes narrower.

This said, the IPCC explicitly encourages experts who are nominated but not selected to contribute as expert reviewers. This role is open and large in scope and U.S. researchers could still participate if their government steps back. U.S. scientists can also still be nominated via non-government routes, for example, by observer organisations.

What are the global repercussions?

The climate talks run on reciprocity. When a very wealthy country with high emissions decides to quit, it weakens the expectation that other major players will also play by the same shared rules. This in turn can harden poor countries' positions; these countries already believe their rich counterparts promise more than they deliver. It can also give cover to other reluctant governments to delay or dilute action.

The timing is also unfortunate because the conversation on climate finance has shifted from the older $100 billion goal towards much larger needs and new targets. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, economically developed countries mobilised $115.9 billion in climate finance in 2022, the first time it exceeded $100 billion. However, adaptation finance remains far below the need: the UN Adaptation Gap Report 2025 estimated it to be $310-365 billion per year by 2035 while international public adaptation finance flows were about $26 billion in 2023.

At the COP29 summit in 2024, governments agreed to a new collective quantified goal of at least $300 billion per year by 2035. The U.S. exiting the world's main climate action bodies makes it harder to make credible deals to reach these numbers because other countries will ask why they should pay more when a major historical emitter is stepping away.

Arms of Trump

Rubio and Vance

Two major events — the U.S. capture of Venezuela's President and the ICE shooting in Minneapolis — highlight the Trump administration's twin priorities — foreign intervention and strict immigration enforcement; Rubio and Vance represent different strands of the MAGA movement

Varghese K. George

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Two developments over the last 10 days have sharply brought into the spotlight two key aspects of U.S. President Donald J. Trump's "Make America Great Again (MAGA)" policy at work – the United States' approach towards the world and its enforcement of immigration laws to rid the country of illegal residents. On January 3, a U.S. military operation captured Venezuela's President and brought him to New York. On January 7, a U.S. citizen, Renee Nicole Good, was shot dead during an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operation in Minneapolis. The facts of, and reasons for, the incident remain contested. At the centre of these two events are two key figures in the Trump administration – Secretary of State Marco Rubio, spearheading U.S. foreign policy, and Vice-President J.D. Vance, whose focus is domestic, particularly immigration enforcement.

Both Mr. Rubio and Mr. Vance are avowed Christians who proclaim their politics to be an extension of their faith. Mr. Rubio and Mr. Vance – aged 54 and 41, respectively – are viewed as the possible heirs to the MAGA movement. Both were originally "Never Trumpers" – who staunchly opposed the President when he entered the political scene in 2015. Later, as colleagues in the Senate, both shifted to the MAGA camp as Trump loyalists. Each was considered a potential running mate for Mr. Trump in the 2024 elections. Mr. Vance made the cut, and is now widely seen as a potential successor of Mr. Trump.

On the set of issues these incidents highlight – American intervention in Venezuela and the unyielding enforcement of immigration policy, Mr. Rubio and Mr. Vance differ in their priorities. Mr. Vance, who joined the Senate in 2023 – 12 years after Mr. Rubio – has been a critic of U.S. interventions abroad. Mr. Rubio, on the other hand, had supported the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the clampdown on Iran as a Senator, and was once known as a foreign policy hawk. However, his views on immigration were softer – he supported amnesty for undocumented residents through his Bill on immigration that he drafted alongside Democrat Senators in 2013. Mr. Rubio was born into a Cuban immigrant family. Mr. Vance, on the other hand, believes U.S. interventions abroad have been largely useless – or even detrimental – to national interests. His focus is on absolute implementation of immigration laws. This makes Mr. Vance a more strident proponent of MAGA's Christian nationalism than Mr. Rubio.

Varying enthusiasm

While both have realigned their positions to reflect a shared approach under the Trump administration, their enthusiasm varies depending on the issues at hand, as was evident over Venezuela operation and the ICE shooting. Mr. Rubio came out all guns blazing to explain and defend the U.S. operation in Venezuela – saying that the involvement has a "three fold-process" involving stabilisation, recovery and transition, and the operation has given the U.S. "strongest possible leverage". He also said that around 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil will be sold by America in the market "for the benefit of the United States" and the profit will be "disbursed" in a way that the Venezuelan people will also benefit down the path. Mr. Vance too made public statements in support but his absence at the presser to announce the Venezuela intervention was noticed. The administration explained it as intentional and driven by operational security concerns. But it would be reasonable to assume that Mr. Vance would be less enthusiastic than Mr. Rubio about any foreign intervention going by their respective track records.

After the shooting of Minneapolis, Mr. Vance was quick to put himself at the centre of the incident. "If you don't like the immigration policy of the Trump administration, attack me. Leave our law enforcement alone," he said on X. "A tragedy? Absolutely. But a tragedy that falls on this woman." Turning the ire on critics, he said, "This was an attack on federal law enforcement. This was an attack on law and order. This was an attack on the American people," baiting a campaign against him which he has earned. Critics of the Trump administration are now taking on Mr. Vance, and he possibly calculates that it would place him as the central character in the succession saga that will begin to play out during the midterm election campaign later this year. The MAGA base, part of which has been turning their ire on him for his Indian-origin wife Usha, could find in him a true torchbearer of their non-interventionist foreign policy and hard enforcement of immigration laws; Mr. Rubio, who over the years held a view that supported interventions abroad and a softer approach to undocumented people in the U.S., is considered a member of the pre-Trump Republicans who were closely aligned with the U.S. security establishment.

Mr. Rubio was a strong critic of Vladimir Putin, which Mr. Trump is not; and a strong supporter of American support for Israel which MAGA is not. As Secretary of State in the Trump administration, Mr. Rubio warned Israel in October 2025 over its actions in the West Bank saying that it could imperil President Trump's plan to end the conflict. On the sidelines of the annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting in September 2025, he urged "Moscow to take meaningful steps toward a durable resolution of the Russia-Ukraine war".

Different strands

Mr. Vance has used his position to advance his international politics of scepticism about Europe, and openness towards Russia. In October 2025, while meeting with Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu, he remarked that "America won't be a puppet" state. On the Knesset's resolution for application of Israeli Law to the West Bank, a move tantamount to takeover, Mr. Vance derided the vote calling it a "very stupid stunt". Their journey as Christian politicians also offer two different strands with their respective policy implications – Mr. Vance moved away from an evangelical sect towards Roman Catholicism; Mr. Rubio drifted from Catholicism towards an evangelical strand though now he is a Roman Catholic again. In the aftermath of the shooting at Minneapolis, Mr. Vance said on an X post: "If you want to say this woman's death is a tragedy, that we should pray for her soul as Christians and Americans, then I agree with you." Meanwhile, Mr. Rubio has remained silent on the incident.

While Mr. Vance continues to occupy the prime position as the favourite of the MAGA universe, Mr. Rubio would clearly have the backing of the establishment. That all U.S. Senators across both parties voted for Mr. Rubio's confirmation as the Secretary of State tells something about his acceptability. It is precisely that acceptability that makes him a suspect in the MAGA world. For Mr. Vance, it is confrontation that he seeks and gets. By going ballistic against critics and in defence of ICE officers, Mr. Vance seemed to reclaim the spotlight that had turned to Mr. Rubio after Venezuela.

(Research by Tabshir Shams)

THE GIST

- Rubio focuses on assertive foreign policy, while Vance stresses hardline immigration control and also non-intervention abroad
- Rubio defended the Venezuelan operation, framing it as a strategic move to 'stabilise' the region, while Vance's muted stance suggested discomfort with foreign interventions
- Vance gained political attention after the ICE shooting by defending law enforcement, reinforcing his image as a possible successor to Trump

Pragmatic successor

Delcy Rodriguez

Venezuela's interim leader must navigate the country from imminent economic collapse, while managing the interests of the Chavista rearguard

Srinivasan Ramani

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

Merely a couple of days after the abduction and detention of President Nicholas Maduro by U.S. Special Forces, Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez was sworn in as the Acting President of Venezuela in surreal circumstances. U.S. President Donald Trump backed Ms. Rodriguez over the claims of Opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Machado, whom he called "not respected" despite her saying everything in favour of Mr. Trump and his imperialist actions.

Mr. Trump's "endorsement" of Ms. Rodriguez as Washington's preferred interlocutor reveals the contradictions at the heart of Venezuela's new political reality. On January 5, when her brother Jorge, President of the National Assembly, administered the presidential oath, Ms. Rodriguez delivered a defiant inaugural address condemning the "kidnapping" of Mr. Maduro, the country's "legitimate President".

Yet, she also extended an invitation to Washington for a "cooperation agenda" and "shared development".

For Ms. Rodriguez, this U.S. imperialist conjuncture represents a difficult choice. She must navigate Venezuela from imminent economic collapse while managing the interests of the Chavista rearguard and a restive military establishment bristling at attacks on national sovereignty.

Ms. Rodriguez's father Jorge Antonio Rodriguez, a founder of the Marxist Socialist League, died from custodial torture when she was seven, after being arrested in connection with a corporate executive's kidnapping. Within the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), the siblings are seen as inheritors of an ideological outlook represented by their deceased father, unlike Mr. Maduro who rose through trade union activism or Diosdado Cabello, Hugo Chavez's compatriot with a military and political legacy. Mr. Cabello controls the PSUV's radical wing and organisation.

Ms. Rodriguez is, however, no mere ideologue, combining her activism from student days with training in Europe that has enabled her to navigate diplomatic circles in New York and Geneva. This helped her exercise technocratic authoritarianism especially as the Maduro administration moved away from the charismatic populism of the Chavez era.

Face of diplomacy

Between 2014 and 2017, as Foreign Minister, Ms. Rodriguez became the face of Venezuelan diplomacy during its most confrontational period, when she withdrew Venezuela from the Organization of American States, which she characterised as a "Ministry of Colonies" under U.S. hegemony.

As Executive Vice-President from 2018 to earlier this week, Ms. Rodriguez managed Venezuela's economy and guided it to a more manageable crisis after the disaster of 2017, with hyperinflation, lack of essential goods, poor oil production and massive out-migration. She maintained radical rhetoric while implementing market-friendly reforms that allowed contracts to Venezuelan business classes to circumvent U.S. sanctions.

The challenges Ms. Rodriguez faces are greater than before. The U.S. demands economic capitulation and handover of Venezuela's assets, which will be strongly resisted by the Chavistas. She must balance the interests of the military establishment, to whom Mr. Maduro had ceded control of key economic institutions to consolidate power.

Two factors may offer limited room for manoeuvre. First, the lack of unanimous support for full-scale invasion among Mr. Trump's MAGA base, which partly explains his "endorsement" of her interim authority over regime change. Second, Chavistas recognise that further escalation could trigger complete economic collapse and loss of popular support.

Yet, the situation is also volatile. With the Trump administration featuring hardline Latin American emigré descendants like Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and a Venezuelan opposition elite long determined to reclaim power by any means necessary, Ms. Rodriguez must navigate an increasingly narrow path between capitulation and confrontation.

Yemen's separatists

Southern Transitional Council

The STC's military and political advances led to its integration in Yemen's government through the Riyadh Agreement, but dissatisfaction prompted recurring clashes

Pallavi Keswani

AP

On January 3, the Southern Transitional Council (STC) in Yemen announced a new Constitution for the "State of South Arabia".

Nearly a decade since its formation, the STC appears closer than ever to achieving its goal of a separate southern Yemen, – or "South Arabia" as it calls the region – independent from the North. However, the subsequent days revealed the group's struggle to maintain its gains.

The STC credits its emergence to the pre-Arab Spring movement in southern Yemen known as "Al-Hirak al-Janoubi", or "Hirak", which led demonstrations demanding autonomy from the Ali Abdullah Saleh-led north.

A key figure among them was Aidarous Qassem al-Zubaidi, who, with the support from the UAE, was successful in countering Houthi advancement in Al Dhale and Lahij in 2015. The UAE, subsequently, persuaded then-President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi to appoint Mr. al-Zubaidi as Governor of Aden.

Over the next two years, however, Mr. al-Zubaidi and Mr. Hadi clashed on several occasions. Tensions reached breaking point over control of Aden's airport in February 2017, prompting Mr. Hadi to sack him. Three months later, on May 11, 2017, Mr. al-Zubaidi announced the formation of a 26-member STC, with the goal of making "South Arabia" a geopolitical reality.

Mr. al-Zubaidi moved quickly to legitimise the STC. He installed himself as the chair of the Presidium, and unified various UAE-backed armed groups under the "Southern Armed Forces". This proved crucial in the STC's eventual takeover of Aden's presidential palace in 2019. Saudi Arabia subsequently brought Mr. al-Zubaidi and Mr. Hadi to the negotiating table for the Riyadh Agreement, which provided for the STC's inclusion in the Yemeni government. Dissatisfied with the Agreement's implementation, the STC recaptured Aden and declared self-rule in April 2020.

In 2022, after Mr. Hadi ceded power to the Saudi-backed Presidential Leadership Council (PLC), the STC joined the body, with Mr. al-Zubaidi appointed as a Vice-President under Rashad al-Alimi. Barely a year later, with the Houthis launching attacks against Western vessels in the Red Sea, the STC reaffirmed its allegiance to the U.S-led anti-Houthi efforts.

On the domestic front, Mr. al-Zubaidi continued to work on increasing STC's autonomy.

In September 2025, Mr. al-Zubaidi set the ball rolling with the announcement of 13 decrees that placed Southern leaders in various government positions, as the STC accused the PLC of "undermining the legitimate rights of the people of the South". Later, in an interview, he ruled out any possibility of negotiations, and claimed that "the best solution for Yemen [against Houthis] and the best path to stability is the two-state solution".

In December 2025, the STC launched Operation Promising Future and took over control of the Hadramout and Al-Mahra Governorates. The STC claimed that the operation was necessitated to liberate these regions from Houthis, al-Qaeda and ISIS. Hadramout's conquest marked the biggest gain for STC yet, with the group now in control of 80% of the country's oil reserves.

This, however, barely lasted a month with Saudi Arabia launching strikes first against STC positions and then targeting a UAE vessel it said was delivering more weapons to the group. On ground, Saudi-backed forces swiftly recaptured lost territories. The STC's December actions deepened tensions between the Saudi and the Emirati governments. As Riyadh set about to host another dialogue to resolve the tensions, the STC found itself leaderless. Aden had fallen, Mr. al-Zubaidi was removed from the Presidential Council and declared a traitor, and as per Mr. Alimi had fled to the UAE.

Over the years, the STC fought to keep alive the possibility of a separate southern Yemen, but found it increasingly difficult to replicate the pre-1990 realities in 2026. Its reliance on the UAE and Yemen's GCC-controlled government, for now, has kept the STC apart from "South Arabia".

JERUSALEM

Netanyahu hopes to end reliance on U.S. military aid in next decade

AFP

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants Israel to be able to cope without U.S. military aid within a decade, he said in an interview published on Friday. Israel receives approximately $3.8 billion in annual financial aid from the United States for arms purchases under an agreement signed in 2016 and valid till 2028. AFP

TOKYO

Japan PM mulling snap general election in coming weeks: reports

AP

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is considering calling a general election in the coming weeks to capitalise on strong public support for her government, media reports said. Ms. Takaichi was appointed the country's first woman Prime Minister in October last year and her cabinet enjoys an approval rating of around 70%. AFP

BRUSSELS

EU countries override France to green-light Mercosur trade deal

AFP

The EU gave a long-delayed go-ahead on Friday to a trade deal with South American bloc Mercosur championed by business groups but loathed by European farmers — overriding opposition led by France. The deal will create a vast market of more than 700 million people, making it one of the world's largest free trade areas. AFP

WEST POINT

Six killed in Mississippi shootings; 24-year-old suspect charged

REUTERS

Authorities have charged a 24-year-old man with murder after six people were killed in a series of related shootings on Friday night in northeast Mississippi, United States. Clay County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Steven Woodruff confirmed that the assailant has been charged in the killings. AP

U.S. and Venezuela take first steps in restoring ties after Maduro's capture

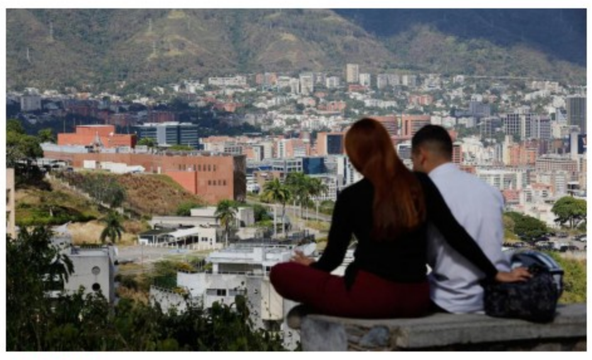
Senior U.S. diplomats in Caracas to discuss reopening of the country's embassy; Delcy Rodriguez-led interim govt. initiates 'exploratory diplomatic process' as Trump meets with oil companies over his plans to access Venezuela's crude reserves

Agence France-Presse
CARACAS

Venezuela was set to hold talks on Saturday with U.S. envoys in Caracas on restoring diplomatic ties, days after U.S. forces deposed Nicolas Maduro as its president.

Venezuela said on Friday it had launched discussions with U.S. diplomats in the capital, the latest sign of cooperation following the leader's capture and U.S. President Donald Trump's claim to be "in charge" of the South American country.

Officials said the U.S. envoys were in Caracas to discuss reopening the country's embassy, while in Washington, Mr. Trump met with oil companies over his plans to access Venezuela's huge crude reserves.



Viewpoint: A couple sits on a bench overlooking the United States embassy in Caracas, Venezuela on Friday. AP

The government of interim President Delcy Rodriguez "has decided to initiate an exploratory diplomatic process with the government of the United States of America, aimed at re-establishing diplomatic missions in both countries," Foreign Minister Yvan Gil said in a statement.

John McNamara, the top U.S. diplomat in neighbouring Colombia, and other personnel "travelled to Caracas to conduct an initial assessment for a potential phased resumption of operations," a U.S. official said.

Ms. Rodriguez in a statement condemned "the serious, criminal, illegal and illegitimate attack" by the United States and vowed: "Venezuela will continue to confront this aggression through the diplomatic route."

Mr. Trump said on Friday that he had called off a second wave of attacks on Venezuela due in part to the release of political prisoners.

Vows oil investments

At a White House meeting on Friday, Mr. Trump pressed top oil executives to invest in Venezuela's reserves, but was met with a cautious reception with ExxonMobil chief executive Darren Woods dismissing the country as "uninvestable" without reforms.

Mr. Trump said foreign firms had enjoyed no meaningful protections under Mr. Maduro, "but now you have total security. It's a whole different Venezuela". Mr. Trump earlier said that oil companies promised to invest $100 billion in Venezuela.

'Don't want to be Americans': Greenland parties push back against latest Trump threat

Agence France-Presse
NUUK

Greenland's political parties said they did not want to be under Washington as U.S. President Donald Trump again suggested using force to seize the mineral-rich Danish autonomous territory, raising concern worldwide.

The statement late on Friday came after Mr. Trump repeated that Washington was "going to do something on Greenland, whether they like it or not".

"We don't want to be Americans, we don't want to be Danish, we want to be Greenlanders," Greenland Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen and leaders of four parties in Greenland's Parliament said in a joint statement. "The future of Greenland must be decided by Greenlanders."

Jens-Frederik Nielsen

"No other country can meddle in this. We must decide our country's future ourselves – without pressure to make a hasty decision, without procrastination, and without interference from other countries," they underscored.

A Danish colony until 1953, Greenland gained home rule 26 years later and is contemplating eventually loosening its ties with Denmark.

The coalition currently in power is not in favour of a hasty independence. The only opposition party, Naleraq, which won 24.5% of the vote in the 2025 legislative elections, wants to cut ties as quickly as possible but it is also a signatory of the joint declaration.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that an invasion of Greenland would end "everything", meaning the transatlantic NATO defence pact and the post-World War II security structure.

Syrian Army says stopping operations in Aleppo, but Kurds deny fighting is over

Agence France-Presse
ALEPPO

At least 21 killed; over 1,50,000 people have been displaced, says city governor

The Syrian Army said on Saturday that it was halting military operations in an Aleppo neighbourhood following days of clashes, but Kurdish forces there maintained they were still under attack.

The violence in Syria's second largest city erupted after efforts to integrate the Kurds' de facto autonomous administration and military into the country's new government stalled.

In a statement to the official *SANA* news agency, the military announced "a halt to all military operations in the Sheikh Maqsud neighbourhood" on Saturday, adding that Kurdish forces there would be "transferred" to the Kurdish-controlled city of Tabaqa in northeastern Syria.

But the Kurdish forces said their fighters were still repelling a "fierce attack", and called the Army statement "a blatant attempt to mislead public opinion".

Government forces began striking the district overnight after a deadline elapsed for Kurdish fighters to withdraw during a ceasefire. Syria's Army said earlier on Saturday that it had completed a "security sweep" of Sheikh Maqsud, while urging residents to stay in their homes. The Kurdish forces, however, denied claims that the government now controlled the vast majority of the neighbourhood.

Since the fighting began on Tuesday, at least 21 civilians have been killed, according to figures from both sides, while Aleppo's governor said 155,000 people have been displaced.

The clashes present yet another challenge as the country struggles to forge a new path after the ousting of long-time ruler Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

U.S. seizes yet another oil tanker in the Caribbean

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. forces boarded another oil tanker in the Caribbean Sea on Friday, the U.S. military said, as the Trump administration targets sanctioned tankers travelling to and from Venezuela as part of a broader effort to take control of the South American country's oil.

The U.S. Southern Command announced the seizure of tanker *Olina*. In her post on X, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said the ship was "another 'ghost fleet' tanker ship suspected of carrying embargoed oil". The *Olina* is the fifth tanker seized by U.S. forces.

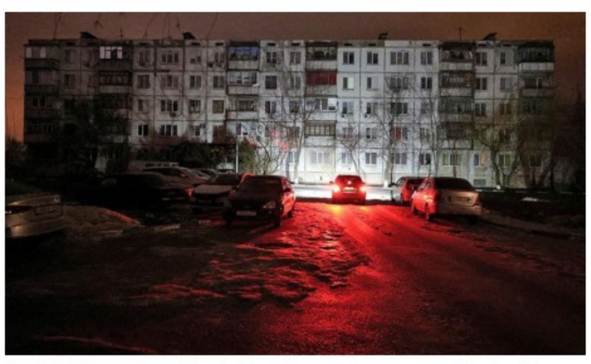
Ukrainian strike knocks out power for over half a million in Russia's Belgorod

Reuters
MOSCOW

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, said on Saturday that 6,00,000 residents were without electricity, heating and water after a Ukrainian missile strike.

In a statement posted on Telegram, Vyacheslav Gladkov said that work was under way to restore supplies, but that the situation was "extremely challenging".

Belgorod region, which adjoins Ukraine's Kharkiv region and had a pre-war population of 1.5 million, has come under regular attack from Kyiv's forces since Russia ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022.



Darkest hour: A residential building during a power blackout in Belgorod, Russia on Friday. REUTERS

Oil depot targeted

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone strike caused a fire at an oil depot in the Oktyabrskiy district in the southern part of Russia's Volgograd region, regional authorities said.

Governor Andrei Bocharov was quoted as saying in a post on his administration's Telegram channel that there had been no casualties reported so far, but that people living nearby may have to be evacuated. Ukraine's military said on Saturday it had struck the Zhutovskaya oil depot overnight.

Saturday's attacks came a day after Russia bombarded Ukraine with hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles, according to Ukrainian officials, killing at least four people in the capital.

For only the second time in the nearly 4-year-old war, Moscow used a powerful new hypersonic missile that struck western Ukraine on Friday in a clear warning to Kyiv's NATO allies.

MAXIMUMS GALORE

Gujarat Giants-UP Warriorz game tops the list with 21 sixes

AFP

The Gujarat Giants-UP Warriorz match had 21 sixes, the most in a WPL match, bettering the 19 by Royal Challengers Bengaluru-Delhi Capitals in a league-stage clash in 2024. The 404-run aggregate in the GG-UPW contest is the second highest in the league behind the 438 scored by RCB and UP Warriorz in a league-stage match in 2025.

IMPRESSIVE

Anushka opens up different areas while batting, says Gardner

PTI

She (Anushka) is a special player. She keeps the game simple but also opens up different areas of the ground, and for someone so young to be brave enough to do that is impressive — Ashleigh Gardner on Anushka Sharma's batting in the second match of the Women's Premier League between Gujarat Giants and UP Warriorz.

BIG BOOST

India tour a huge benefit for Kiwis ahead of the World Cup: Bracewell

VIJAY SONEJI

Spending more than five weeks in India prior to the beginning of the T20 World Cup will be a huge boost for New Zealand. Michael Bracewell, the Kiwi ODI captain, had no qualms in admitting it. "It's a huge benefit to begin this far out from the World Cup, but yeah, I think we are certainly concentrating on this ODI series," he said.

NEW EXPERIENCE

NZ captain hopes his team will be able to cope with a sold-out crowd

VIJAY SONEJI

The tickets for the first ODI in Vadodara were sold out in eight minutes. With 30,000 spectators set to cheer for the Men in Blue, Black Caps captain Michael Bracewell, is hoping that his boys will be able to cope with it. "To come here in front of a sold-out crowd is a little bit different for a few guys in the group".

Harmanpreet, Sciver-Brunt on song as MI hands out a thrashing to DC

The skipper makes an unbeaten 42-ball 74 and the No. 3 batter a 46-ball 70 as the defending champion makes 195; the Delhi batters, barring Henry, fail to get going; medium-pacer Carey and leg-spinner Kerr scalp three each for the home team

WPL-4

Lavanya L
NAVI MUMBAI

Jemimah Rodrigues holds the D.Y. Patil Stadium close to her heart. It was where the local favourite made her Test debut, won her first World Cup, and began her run as captain of Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League. That last experience, however, brought with it a 50-run defeat to Mumbai Indians in its 2026 campaign opener here on Saturday.

MI came into the match licking its wounds from the loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru and seemed to have had some hard conversations.

However, the first few overs after being put in to bat eerily resembled the defending champion's struggles against RCB.

Amelia Kerr was sent back by Chinelle Henry for a duck, courtesy a brilliant Lizelle Lee behind the stumps. G. Kamalini could only crawl to a 19-ball 16 before falling to debutant Nandani Sharma.

Nat Sciver-Brunt's assault left Jemimah stumped for answers and helped Harmanpreet Kaur break free, the pair stitching a quick-fire 66-run stand.

Shree Charani dialled up the pace to snare Sciver-Brunt. Harmanpreet had Nicola Carey for company to inflict more damage before Nandani sent the latter packing. Despite having a great night, the Chandigarh medium-pacer was surprisingly given only three overs. Harmanpreet plundered 19 runs off the final over to take MI just short of 200.

In top gear: Harmanpreet hit eight fours and three sixes. AFP

The new DC opening pair of Shafali Verma and Lee started cautiously, with Shabnim Ismail's searing pace posing questions aplenty. Sciver-Brunt removed the dangerous Lee with an off-cutter while Carey struck off Shafali and Laura Wolvaardt for single-digit scores in a span of three balls.

Soon Jemimah perished for one as Kamalini's fantastic one-handed catch did the job. Marizanne Kapp knelt on one knee to smoke Carey for a six down the ground but holed out to short third while attempting an encore off the next ball.

Powerplay: Sciver-Brunt provided a sizzling start for MI. AFP

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS

Amelia Kerr c Lee b Henry 0 *(1b)*, G. Kamalini c Lee b Nandani 16 *(19b, 3x4)*, Nat Sciver-Brunt c Jemimah b Shree Charani 70 *(46b, 13x4)*, Harmanpreet Kaur (not out) 74 *(42b, 8x4, 3x6)*, Nicola Carey b Nandani 21 *(12b, 4x4)*, Sajeevan Sajana (not out) 5 *(2b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-4, nb-2, w-3): 9; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 195.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-2 (Kerr, 1.1 overs), 2-51 (Kamalini, 6.3), 3-117 (Sciver-Brunt, 14.2), 4-170 (Carey, 18.3).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Kapp 4-0-27-0, Henry 3-0-32-1, Shree Charani 4-0-45-1, Nandani 3-0-26-2, Sneh 3-0-32-0, Minnu 3-0-29-0.

DELHI CAPITALS

Lizelle Lee c Ismail b Sciver-Brunt 10 *(10b, 2x4)*, Shafali Verma b Carey 8 *(13b, 1x4)*, Laura Wolvaardt b Carey 9 *(5b, 2x4)*, Jemimah Rodrigues c Kamalini b Ismail 1 *(3b)*, Marizanne Kapp c Poonam b Carey 10 *(6b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Niki Prasad b Kerr 12 *(18b, 1x4)*, Chinelle Henry c Carey b Kerr 56 *(33b, 5x4, 3x6)*, Sneh Rana c Carey b Sciver-Brunt 11 *(11b, 1x6)*, Minnu Mani c Kamalini b Kerr 7 *(6b, 1x4)*, Shree Charani (not out) 10 *(6b, 2x4)*, Nandani Sharma c Amanjot b Sanskriti 0 *(3b)*; Extras (b-2, lb-1, w-8): 11; Total (in 19 overs): 145.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-15 (Lee, 3.1), 2-32 (Shafali, 4.3), 3-33 (Wolvaardt, 4.5), 4-33 (Jemimah, 5.2), 5-46 (Kapp, 6.6), 6-86 (Niki, 11.4), 7-108 (Sneh, 14.5), 8-133 (Henry, 17.1), 9-136 (Minnu, 17.6).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Ismail 4-0-14-1, Sciver-Brunt 3-0-29-2, Carey 4-0-37-3, Kerr 4-0-24-3, Triveni 1-0-12-0, Amanjot 2-0-17-0, Sanskriti 1-0-9-1.

Toss: DC.

PoM: Harmanpreet.

Mumbai Indians won by 50 runs.

Henry braved the fall of wickets at the other end, scoring a half-century along the way.

But Carey, who dropped the West Indian in the 14th over, dismissed her in the 18th, effectively snuffing out DC's hopes.

Gardner, Anushka and Wareham do it for Giants

Lavanya L
NAVI MUMBAI

The Women's Premier League is a quirky tournament. The competition tries hard to get the creme de la creme of overseas talent, but is never happy when they are the ones outshining the local stars season after season.

However, Gujarat Giants' clinical 10-run victory over UP Warriorz at the D.Y. Patil Stadium here on Saturday, despite being headlined by the exploits of the foreign talent pool on both sides, will perhaps be remembered best for the audacity of two young Indians - Anushka Sharma and Shweta Sehrawat.

Put in to bat, the Giants' openers, Beth Mooney and Sophie Devine, got off to a flying start with 40 runs scored in the first four overs. Sophie Ecclestone soon sent Mooney back to draw debutant Anushka to the hot seat.

The Madhya Pradesh batter found the boundary with elan, giving her partner Ashleigh Gardner the confidence to free her arms. A 103-run partnership left Lanning with aggressively pursed lips.

Georgia Wareham, then sent the ball flying to the stands in the death. Bharti Fulmali chipped in with two big sixes to take the Giants to its biggest total in the tournament's history.

One would have thought a cakewalk was to follow for a lineup that featured Lanning, Phoebe Litchfield and Deandra Dottin, but it was anything but that. Kiran Navgire's early dismissal sent Lanning into a shell. Wareham struck twice in the ninth over, first breaking the Lanning-Litchfield pairing and then removing Harleen Deol.

Dottin, Sophie Ecclestone and Asha Sobhana chipped away desperately at the target, but the shaky start left them short of time to push for a win, ending the Giants' dubious streak of losses in all of their season openers so far.

Key contributor: Gardner put the Warriorz attack to the sword. PTI

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT GIANTS

Beth Mooney b Ecclestone 13 *(12b, 1x4)*, Sophie Devine c Litchfield b Shikha 38 *(20b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Anushka Sharma c Harleen b Dottin 44 *(30b, 7x4)*, Ashleigh Gardner b Ecclestone 65 *(41b, 6x4, 3x6)*, Georgia Wareham (not out) 27 *(10b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Bharti Fulmali (not out) 14 *(7b, 2x6)*; Extras (b-1, w-5): 6; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 207.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-41 (Mooney, 4.2 overs), 2-55 (Devine, 5.4), 3-158 (Anushka, 16.1), 4-173 (Gardner, 17.5).

WARRIORZ BOWLING

Kranti 3-0-30-0, Shikha 3-0-29-1, Dottin 4-0-47-1, Deepti 3-0-32-0, Ecclestone 4-0-32-2, Asha Sobhana 3-0-36-0.

UP WARRIORZ

Kiran Navgire b Renuka 1 *(4b)*, Meg Lanning lbw b Wareham 30 *(27b, 5x4)*, Phoebe Litchfield c Bharti b Devine 78 *(40b, 8x4, 5x6)*, Harleen Deol c & b Wareham 0 *(2b)*, Deepti Sharma c & b Renuka 1 *(2b)*, Shweta Sehrawat b Rajeshwari 25 *(17b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Deandra Dottin c Bharti b Gardner 12 *(9b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Sophie Ecclestone c Kashvee b Devine 11 *(8b, 2x4)*, Asha Sobhana (not out) 27 *(10b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Shikha Pandey (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (b-4, lb-1, w-6): 11; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 197.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-3 (Kiran, 0.5), 2-73 (Lanning, 8.3), 3-73 (Harleen, 8.5), 4-74 (Deepti, 9.1), 5-143 (Shweta, 14.6), 6-150 (Litchfield, 15.4), 7-167 (Dottin, 17.4), 8-182 (Ecclestone, 19.2).

GIANTS BOWLING

Renuka 4-0-25-2, Kashvee 4-0-38-0, Devine 4-0-55-2, Gardner 3-0-37-1, Wareham 4-0-30-2, Rajeshwari 1-0-7-1.

Toss: UPW.

PoM: Wareham.

Giants won by 10 runs.

Upstaging India will take some doing for young Kiwis

NZ IN INDIA

Amol Karhadkar
VADODARA

It is a face-off between the top two teams in the ICC ODI rankings. It is also a repeat of the Champions Trophy final.

Not too long ago, a three-match ODI series between India and New Zealand would have been among the most anticipated contests on the international calendar.

But in a T20-driven cricketing landscape, ODIs have struggled for relevance. With the countdown to the Men's T20 World Cup already underway, bilateral ODI series are no longer accorded the same significance.

In fact, they are often weighed almost on par with domestic performances when it comes to Test selection across the globe.

Still, there is more to India's three-match ODI series against New Zealand, beginning on Sunday, than just the Ro-Ko euphoria.

Powerhouse: India will look to maintain its formidable home record. VIJAY SONEJI

For starters, both the captain and vice-captain (Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer) are returning from injury layoffs.

They will have points to prove after being overlooked for the T20 World Cup. Gill missed out at the last minute despite being the T20I vice-captain in the lead-up, while Shreyas has increasingly been bracketed as an ODI specialist over the past couple of years.

Unsurprisingly, the duo was among the seven batters who had an extended workout at the Baroda Cricket Association Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

Gill missed the remainder of the South Africa tour after suffering a neck spasm in the series opener, while the Mumbaikar is set to return after recovering from an abdominal tear sustained in Australia last October. Both will be eager to make an impact as men's international cricket returns to Vadodara after a 15-year hiatus.

Besides Gill and Shreyas, Mohammed Siraj will also be keen to find his rhythm after being rested for the South Africa series. While Virat Kohli took it easy alongside the bowlers, Rohit Sharma turned up for a brief batting session.

> I try to focus on what I need to do now and what is important. The more we can stay in the present moment, the simpler life becomes

> I respect the selectors' decision and wish the T20 team the very best. I really, really hope they win the World Cup
> SHUBMAN GILL

Rishabh Pant, who took a blow to the abdomen while batting against a side-armer during net practice, is unavailable for selection for the match.

In fact, Pant is likely to be ruled out of the series due to heavy bruising.

While India will look to maintain its formidable home record, New Zealand will rely heavily on youth. With Mitchell Santner set to join the squad for the subsequent T20I series, all-rounder Michael Bracewell will lead an inexperienced side.

Seasoned campaigners such as Devon Conway, Daryl Mitchell and Kyle Jamieson will need to guide the group if the visitors are to challenge an ODI powerhouse on its own turf. Pacer Kristian Clarke is set to make his international debut on Sunday.

The teams (from):

India: Shubman Gill (Capt.), Shreyas Iyer (Vice-capt.), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, K.L. Rahul (wk), Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Nitish Kumar, Arshdeep Singh and Yashasvi Jaiswal.

New Zealand: Michael Bracewell (Capt.), Adithya Ashok, Kristian Clarke, Josh Clarkson, Devon Conway, Zak Foulkes, Mitch Hay (wk), Kyle Jamieson, Nick Kelly, Jayden Lennox, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Glenn Phillips, Michael Rae and Will Young.

Match starts at 1.30 p.m.

Need to prepare well to win Tests: Gill

Amol Karhadkar
VADODARA

Shubman Gill, India's Test and ODI captain, has suggested that the BCCI let the Test team prepare better ahead of a major series.

"One of the suggestions that I was very keen on is, if you would see in the last two Test series that we played, we didn't have that much time to prepare," Gill said here on Saturday on the eve of India's three-match ODI series against New Zealand.

"It's not easy playing in a different country and then playing in India on the fourth day. Especially when you're travelling on long tours. Even if you had won the series against South Africa, it still wouldn't have made that much of a difference, because we know we need to prepare well to be able to win Test matches all over the world."

Gill's remarks came a day after the BCCI president Mithun Manhas, secretary Devajit Saikia and vice-president Rajeev Shukla met along with the Centre of Excellence head V.V.S. Laxman and general manager cricket operations Abey Kuruvilla to chart out roadmap for progress in Test cricket.

The BCCI has been soul-searching ever since India was whitewashed by South Africa at home two months ago. Saikia admitted after the meeting that the BCCI is keen on imbuing red-ball skills among the youngsters who are more focused on T20 exploits.

Gill underlined the importance of preparation. "Preparation for me is really big, and I didn't think that we had that much time to prepare when we came back from Australia, or even after the Asia Cup when we played the West Indies series," he said.

"I think we will take some action and we will keep it in mind to be able to prepare well before the start of any red-ball series".

INBRIEF

Malaysia Open: Sindhu loses to Wang in semifinals

P.V. Sindhu's impressive run came to an end after a 16-21, 15-21 defeat to China's Wang Zhiyi in the women's singles semifinals of the season-opening Malaysia Open Super 1000 in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday.

Poland to face Switzerland in United Cup final

Poland reached the United Cup final after Katarzyna Kawa and Jan Zielinski defeated Coco Gauff and Christian Harrison 7-6(5), 7-6(3) in a mixed doubles decider in Sydney. Poland will face Switzerland in Sunday's final.

The results (semifinals): Switzerland bt Belgium 2-1 (Belinda Bencic bt Elise Mertens 6-3, 4-6, 7-6(0); Stan Wawrinka lost to Zizou Bergs 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-3; Belinda Bencic & Jakub Paul bt Elise Mertens & Zizou Bergs 6-3, 0-6, [10-5]). **Poland bt USA 2-1** (Hubert Hurkacz bt Taylor Fritz 7-6(1), 7-6(2); Iga Swiatek lost to Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-2; Katarzyna Kawa & Jan Zielinski bt Coco Gauff & Christian Harrison 7-6(5), 7-6(3)).

Ebnoutalib scores on debut as Frankfurt hold Dortmund

New Eintracht Frankfurt striker Younes Ebnoutalib crowned a dream Bundesliga debut with a second-half goal in a rollercoaster 3-3 draw with Borussia Dortmund on Friday.

The results: On Friday: LaLiga: Getafe 1 (Juanmi 90) lost to Real Sociedad 2 (Mendez 36, Aramburu 90+6). **Bundesliga:** Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Uzun 22-pen, Ebnoutalib 71, Dahoud 90+2) drew with Borussia Dortmund 3 (Beier 10, Nmecha 68, Chukwuemeka 90+6).

LIVE TELECAST

Badminton: Malaysian Open, SS Select 1, Star Sports 3 & JioHotstar, 7.30 a.m.
India vs New Zealand: 1st ODI, Star Sports 2 & JioHotstar, 1.30 p.m.
HIL: Sony Sports Ten 1, 3 & LIV, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: DAZN, 5, 7.30, 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Monday)
LaLiga: FanCode, 6.30 & 8.45 p.m.
WPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7 p.m.
Sri Lanka vs Pakistan: 3rd T20I, Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 7 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 8 &10 p.m.

Jadumani punches his way to maiden National title; Aditya shocks Abhinash

Nikhat, Lovlina and Minakshi reassert their class; Pooja claims a record 10th gold in the 80kg category; SSCB pugilists rule the roost in men's section

BOXING

Uthra Ganesan
GREATER NOIDA

Jadumani Singh had a point to prove to the naysayers and the 21-year-old did so in style, winning the 55kg title for his first senior title at the National boxing championships at the Gautam Buddha University on Saturday.

Jadumani got the better of senior pro and sparring partner Pawan Bartwal 5-0 with a flurry of punches and upper cuts to add to his list of big scalps in what is fast shaping up to be the most competitive category in Indian boxing.

He had outplayed two-time Olympian and World championship medallist Amit Panghal in the semifinal.

Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) teammates Pawan and Jadumani matched in both power and endurance. But the youngster from Manipur clearly had planned better, preferring quality over quantity and landing fewer but more scoring punches.

Too good: Lovlina outplayed Sanamacha in the 75kg category final. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Himachal youngster Abhinash Jamwal, however, was upset by Aditya Pratap of SSCB in the 65kg category final, one of the nine golds the team won in the men's section.

Abhinash, with several impressive international outings through 2025 under his belt, had the upper hand early on but was soon unable to match his opponent's aggression and skills, losing 2-3 in a close bout.

Interestingly, Aditya had knocked out Abhinash in their previous meeting during the REC combined national talent hunt programme in 2024.

The women's section was more on the predictable lines with all but one bout decided by unanimous decisions in favour of the favourite.

Nikhat Zareen came out top in a messy, physical bout with Nitu Ghanghas in 51kg while Minakshi Hooda retained her 48kg title against Manju Rani and Pooja Rani won a record 10th National title in 80kg to extend her dominance.

Lovlina Borgohain beat Sanamacha Chanu 5-0 to reign supreme in 75kg.

The results (finals): Men: 50kg: Vishwanath Suresh (SSCB) bt Rishi Singh (UP) 5-0; **55kg:** Jadumani Singh (SSCB) bt Pawan Bartwal (SSCB) 5-0; **60kg:** Hussamuddin (SSCB) bt Sachin Siwach (SSCB) 3-2; **65kg:** Aditya Pratap (SSCB) bt Abhinash Jamwal (HP) 3-2; **70kg:** Hitesh Gulia (SSCB) bt Deepak (SSCB) 3-2; **75kg:** Sumit Kundu (SSCB) bt Akash (SSCB) 5-0; **80kg:** Ankush (SSCB) bt Malsawmtluanga (SSCB) 5-0; **85kg:** Lokesh (SSCB) bt Jugnoo (SSCB) 5-0; **90kg:** Harsh Chaudhary (Raj) bt Naman (RSPB) 4-1; **90+kg:** Narender (SSCB) bt Sawan Gill (Chd) 5-0.

Women: 48kg: Minakshi Hooda (APISCB) bt Manju Rani (RSPB) 5-0; **51kg:** Nikhat Zareen (Tel) bt Nitu Ghanghas (Har) 5-0; **54kg:** Preeti Pawar (SSCB) bt Poonam Punia (RSPB) 5-0; **57kg:** Prachi (RSPB) bt Vinka (Har) 5-0; **60kg:** Priya (RSPB) bt Disha Patil (Mah) 5-0; **65kg:** Pranjal Yadav (SSCB) bt Kajal (Utk) 4-1; **70kg:** Arundhati Chaudhary (SSCB) bt Sneha (AIPSCB) 5-0; **75kg:** Lovlina Borgohain (Asm) bt Sanamacha Chanu (RSPB) 5-0; **80kg:** Pooja Rani (Har) bt Naina (Har) 5-0; **80+kg:** Alfiya Khan (RSPB) bt Mankirat Kaur (Pun) 5-0.

TN men set up a date with Railways

BASKETBALL

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu men reaffirmed their billing as the favourites with a commanding 102-53 win over Uttar Pradesh in the semifinals of the 75th senior National basketball championship at the Nehru Indoor Stadium here on Saturday.

TN will meet Railways in the summit clash on Sunday after the latter prevailed over Delhi 65-53.

As has been the pattern in TN's matches, the opponents kept the defending champion honest for a while, but couldn't sustain it for the entire 40 minutes.

The visitors took the lead in the first quarter (21-20), but once the hosts upped the ante, U.P.'s challenge fizzled away.

TN came out of the blocks strongly in the second quarter, led by Arvind Kumar Muthukrishnan.

U.P. tried its best through skipper Harsh Dagar and Prince Tyagi to keep pace, but its high-risk approach failed. The northern side converted just six of its 35 attempts from outside the arc.

In form: Muin Bek scored 22 out of TN's 102 points. R. RAGU

In contrast, TN was far more effective in that regard. Muin Bek Hafeez nailed a hat-trick of three pointers heading into the break to give TN a 20-point lead (55-35). Hafeez, who top-scored for TN, also converted all four of his two-pointers.

From then on, it was one-way traffic, with U.P. managing just eight points in the third quarter. Hafeez then fittingly scored a fourth three-pointer to take TN past the three-figure mark.

A similar script followed in the women's semifinals, where reigning champions and favourites Indian Railways comprehensively outplayed Tamil Nadu 88-54 to cruise into the summit clash. Railways will take on Kerala – which beat Madhya Pradesh 87-58 in the last-four stage – in the final.

The results (semifinals): Women: Kerala 87 (J. Jayalakshmi 20, Sreekala Rani 19, Aneesha Cleetus 17, Kavitha Jose 16) bt Madhya Pradesh 58 (Khushi Pal Singh 22, Ananya Maheshwari 12, Manvi Srivastava 12).
Indian Railways 88 (Pushpa Senthilkumar 22, P. Priyanka 18, K.B. Harshitha 10) bt Tamil Nadu 54 (Ashmitha 19).
Men: Indian Railways 65 (Arvinder Singh 13, Sahaij Pratap Singh Sekhon 13, Palpreet Singh Brar 12, Kanwar Gurbaz Singh Sandhu 10) bt Delhi 53 (Ayush Sharma 17, Jeethandar Singh 11).
Tamil Nadu 102 (Muin Bek Hafeez 22, Arvind Kumar Muthukrishnan 18, Pranav Prince 11, A. Anantharaj 10) bt Uttar Pradesh 53 (Prince Tyagi 15, Harsh Dagar 12).

Rahil and Rajender end title drought

MOTORSPORTS

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

The pair of Rahil Pillarisetty (RACR Castrol Power1, Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open) and Rajender Beedani (MAI Racing, Stock 165cc Novice) ended their title drought with a race to spare in the fifth and final round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship, at the Madras International Circuit here on Saturday.

In the Stock 301-400cc class, Varun Patil of Mad Rabbit Racing secured the championship, while Raj Kumar (Motul Sparks Racing) moved to within a single point of the SuperStock Intermediate 165cc title after edging past his teammate Md Samrul Zubair.

Meanwhile, in the Girls (Stock 165cc) category, former national champion Ann Jennifer of Motul Sparks Racing claimed victory to rise to second place in the standings, trailing leader Jagathishee Kumaresan (One Racing) by 20 points heading into Sunday's final race of the season.

Happy times: Rahil is upbeat after clinching the Pro-Stock 301-400cc category title.

The results (provisional – all 6 laps unless mentioned): Pro-Stock 301-400cc Open: 1. Rahil Pillarisetty (RACR Castrol Power 1) 11mins 02.369s; 2. Sarthak Chavan (Petronas TVS Racing) 11:02.661; 3. Rakshith Dave (Petronas TVS Racing) 11:05.699.
SuperStock Intermediate 165cc (3 laps): 1. Raj Kumar (Motul Sparks Racing) 06:26.315; 2. Mohamed Samrul Zubair (Motul Sparks Racing) 06:26.732; 3. Annish Samson (Speed Up Racing) 06:30.178.
Stock 301-400cc (Novice): 1. Jagadeesh Nagaraj (Motul Sparks Racing) 12:14.385; 2. Kamal Navas (Team Rockers Racing) 12:15.089; 3. Shyam Sundar (KYT Helmet ISBK Racing) 12:16.165.
Stock 165cc (Novice): 1. Rajender Beedani (MAI Racing) 12:56.975; 2. R. Hari Haran (RACR Castrol Power 1) 12:57.148; 3. Vignesh Pothu (MAI Racing) 12:58.358.
Girls (Stock 165cc, 5 laps): 1. Ann Jennifer (Motul Sparks Racing) 10:51.606; 2. Saimah Ajaz Baig (KYT Helmet ISBK Racing) 10:57.502; 3. Jagathishree Kumaresan (One Racing) 10:58.022.
Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup (Honda CB 300F): 1. Raivat Dhar 12:49.086; 2. R. Solomon 12:54.279; 3. Alshin Thomas 12:57.513.
Petronas TVS One-Make Championship: Open (RR 310): 1. RS. Abdul Basim 11:46.679; 2. P. Mohan Babu 11:47.397; 3. Md Samrul Zubair 11:48.603.
Rookie (RTR 200, 3 laps): 1. Hari Haran 07:24.780; 2. Steve Waugh Sugi 07:33.054; 3. Akarsh Jangam 07:37.010.

Neeraj splits with Czech coach Zelezny

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Neeraj Chopra on Saturday announced an end to his partnership with Czech coach Jan Zelezny after just one season, which the Indian said was marked by "progress, respect, and a shared love for the sport."

Neeraj did not specify the reason for ending the stint with Zelezny, a bonafide legend of the sport who holds the world record and under whose tutelage the Haryana-lad breached the 90m mark last year.

Reflecting on their work, Neeraj said to learn directly from an athlete he had admired since childhood was a dream come true and gave him a completely new "toolbox of exercises, technical ideas, and fresh perspectives".

Neeraj and Zelezny. X@NEERAJ_CHOPRA1

"Working with Jan opened my eyes to so many new ideas. The way he thinks about technique, rhythm, and movement is incredible, and I learned a lot from every single session we had together," Neeraj said.

Giant-killers Anusha and Sutirtha enter the semifinals in style

WTT FEEDER

Amol Karhadkar
VADODARA

Anusha Kutumbale and Sutirtha Mukherjee emerged as giant-killers as the duo stormed into the women's singles semifinals of the WTT Feeder international table tennis tournament here on Saturday.

Anusha stunned sixth seed Lee Zion of Korea in the round of 16 before packing off fourth seed Yashaswini Ghorpade in the quarterfinals later in the evening. Olympian Sutirtha created the biggest upset of the tournament, seeing off top seed Yang Ha Eun in four games. Sutirtha's powerful forehand strokes proved too awkward for Yang to handle.

Big scalp: Anusha packed off fourth seed Yashaswini in the quarterfinals.

In men's quarterfinals, seventh seed Payas Jain's forehand top-spins got the better of fourth seed Edward Ly of Canada.

The results: Women: Quarterfinal: Anusha Kutumbale bt Yashaswini Ghorpade 11-9, 8-11, 11-3, 11-7; Syndrela Das bt Divyanshi Bhowmick 12-10, 8-11, 11-8, 11-6; Ryu Hanna (Kor) bt Ayhika Mukherjee 11-4, 11-9, 11-5; Sutirtha Mukherjee bt Yang Ha Eun 11-7, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8.
Doubles: Semifinals: Sutirtha & Ayhika bt Park Gahyeon & Lee Zion (Kor) 11-8, 11-3, 11-9; Yoo Yerin & Ryu (Kor) bt Selena Selvakumar & Jennifer Varghese 8-11, 5-11, 11-5, 11-7, 11-8.
Men: Quarterfinals: S.F.R. Snehit bt Ankur Bhattacharjee 11-9, 11-9, 11-7; Payas Jain bt Edward Ly (CAN) 11-6, 11-3, 10-12, 11-7; Manush Shah bt Priyanuj Bhattacharya 12-10, 11-5, 4-11, 11-8; Akash Pal bt Sougata Sarkar 11-7, 11-5, 11-4.
Doubles: Semifinals: Ankur & Payas bt Harmeet Desai & Snehit 9-11, 11-9, 3-11, 11-8, 11-5; Akash & Mudit Dani bt Ronit Bhanja & Oishik Ghosh 8-11, 11-8, 11-8, 11-8.
Mixed doubles: Semifinals: Payas & Syndrela bt Ankur & Taneesha Kotecha 11-6, 11-8, 12-10; Harmeet & Yashaswini bt Raegan Albuquerque & Suhana Saini 11-9, 11-7, 11-8.

Alcaraz downs Sinner in exhibition match

TENNIS

Agence France-Presse
INCHEON

Carlos Alcaraz beat Jannik Sinner in a light-hearted sell-out exhibition match in South Korea on Saturday ahead of the Australian Open.

Eight days before the Melbourne Grand Slam and in their first appearances this year, the Spanish World No. 1 won 7-5, 7-6 (8) in front of an enthusiastic 12,000 crowd here.

Neither will play competitively until the Australian Open, where Italy's World No. 2 Sinner is the defending two-time champion.

The South Korean organisers have not said how much the two players earned, but media reports in Italy suggest each could pocket more than $2 million for the match that lasted one hour and 47 minutes.

Pipers crack the shootout puzzle against Tigers, emerge champions

The Gierts-coached side triumphs in sudden-death after Preeti's strike in the last quarter takes the final to penalties

HIL – WOMEN

Santadeep Dey
RANCHI

Stunning turnaround: Pipers, who finished last in the previous edition, came up trumps. R.V. MOORTHY

It was eventually Sofie Gierts' coaching *tour de force* that saw SG Pipers pull the rabbit out of the hat. For it won the one penalty shootout that mattered.

In the Women's Hockey India League final at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Stadium here on Saturday, the game trickled down to the third sudden-death of the season between Pipers and Shrachi Bengal Tigers. The Bengal franchise had won the last two.

But Lola Riera's rasping shot off a penalty stroke meant the redemption arc of Pipers, who had finished last in the previous edition, was complete. The scoreline of 1(3)-1(2) shone bright on the giant screen.

The first quarter itself saw end-to-end action unfold.

Tigers, in fact, dodged a bullet less than two minutes into the game. Ishika, having taken up the cudgels on Udita's behalf at the baseline, sent in a cross to Jyoti Singh, but the Indian junior team's captain was caught flat-footed. Argentina's Juana Castellaro did get a shot on target a while later, but an alert Jennifer Rizzo warded off the impending danger.

However, it was Tigers who got to welcome Pipers back from the quarter break with the opening goal against the passage of play. Vandana Katariya's decision to go for the high press paid dividends as Lalremsiami burned a hole into the roof of the net with a fiery strike.

Pipers skipper Navneet Kaur came perilously close to equalising in the third quarter, but the ball skidded wide.

Even as the clock seemed to die on Pipers, Preeti Dubey cracked the game wide open.

Taking advantage of a goalmouth scramble, she cut herself some space on the right to launch a tracer bullet that caught an edge off Rizzo's stick before dipping inside the line.

The result:
SG Pipers 1 (Preeti 53) drew with Shrachi Bengal Tigers 1 (Lalremsiami 16); Pipers won 3-2 via shootout.

So has seven points from nine rounds. DEBASISH BHADURI

So ends Arjun's bull run

TATA STEEL CHESS

C. Shyam Sundar
KOLKATA

Arjun Erigaisi was a man in a hurry as he made a storming start to the blitz event in the Tata Steel Chess India 2026 at the Dhono Dhanyo Auditorium here on Saturday, winning five games on the bounce. Among his conquests were Nihal Sarin and Viswanathan Anand.

As all good things come to an end, Arjun's bull run was stopped by American Wesley So in the sixth round, after which the Indian managed only one victory to end the day on 6.5 points. So led the standings with seven points after nine rounds, having begun with a loss to Vidit Gujrathi.

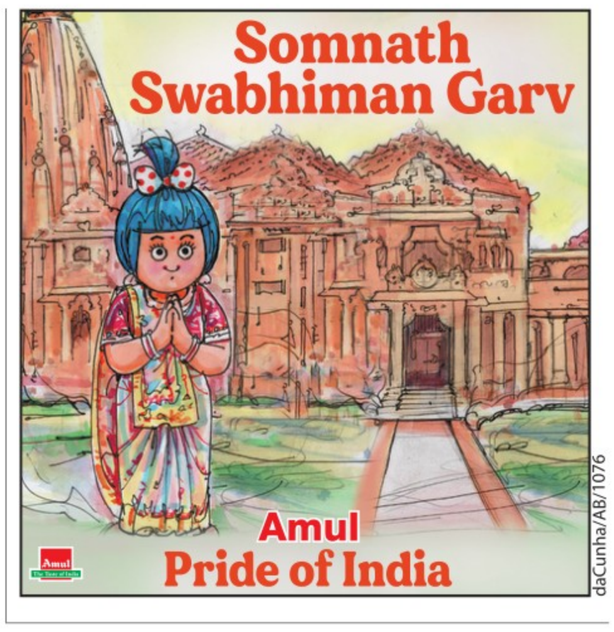
Arjun was second and Nihal, the rapid event winner, third with 5.5 points.

Anand and Vidit, on five points followed. Anand kept himself in the hunt despite a bumpy start, losing three of his initial five games before recovering to register 3.5 points in rounds six to nine.

So's compatriot Carissa Yip jumped to the lead in the women's section (six points), despite defeats to Greece's Stavroula Tsolakidou and Vantika Agrawal.

Tsolakidou, Russia's Aleksandra Goryachkina and R. Vaishali shared the second spot with 5.5 points while Vantika is half a point behind.

Vaishali beat Nana Dzagnidze before losing her way. She, however, finished strongly, stringing together three wins on the trot. Vantika was unbeaten for six rounds before two defeats hurt her chances.



Adding to the kitty: Martinez won his eighth ATP Challenger title. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Clinical Martinez downs Skatov, clinches title

BENGALURU OPEN

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Top seed Pedro Martinez dished out yet another clinical performance to beat Kazakhstan's Timofey Skatov 7-6(5), 6-3 to win the Dafa News Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger 125 at the S.M. Krishna Stadium here on Saturday.

The World No. 96 from Spain will be richer by $33,650, and the 125 points he will gain are set to leave him just outside the top-70. It was Martinez's eighth ATP Challenger title.

On the day, Skatov was the more adventurous player, hitting the ball flat and not averse to trying a point-ending stroke at any given opportunity.

After all, the 24-year-old, a former junior World No. 1, idolises Roger Federer and counts the inside-out forehand as his favourite shot. However, Martinez, 28, was the steadier player, impressing with his top-spin, shot-selection and court-coverage. His tennis idol is compatriot David Ferrer.

But for a break-point Martinez had to save in the ninth game, he was unflappable. He pressured the Skatov serve as early as the fourth game, forcing him to come up with a fierce service-winner to hold. In the 10th game, he ran up a set-point thrice, but unforced errors cost him.

The set slipped into a tie-break and there, at 3-3, a 25-minute rain delay seemed to upset Skatov's rhythm.

Martinez won it to five points as the sixth seed netted a return, and a 2-0 lead in the second stanza set him on the path to ascendency.

In fact, the manner in which Martinez held his first three service games in that set was proof enough of his dominance - two killer forehands to go 2-0 and 3-1 up, and an inch-perfect ace to establish a 4-2 lead.

With Skatov serving to stay in the match at 3-5, Martinez pushed hard.

And his opponent wilted, losing the game to love by dumping a backhand into the net and sending Martinez into a state of rapturous delight.

Other result (final):
Doubles: Nicolas Barrientos (Col) & Benjamin Kittay (USA) bt Arthur Reymond & Luca Sanchez (Fra) 7-6(9), 7-5.

Triumphant: Barrientos and Kittay claimed the doubles title. SUDHAKARA JAIN